



SOCIAL  
PROBLEMS



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HERBERT BLUMER, PH.D., EDITOR

# SOCIAL PROBLEMS

BY

CARL M. ROSENQUIST

PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

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## FOREWORD

POPULAR and scientific literature dealing with social problems is practically unlimited in quantity and is currently being produced at such a rapid rate that not even the most diligent reader can hope to see more than a small part of it. The sociologist who attempts to bring this material together in a volume of portable size discovers at once that bibliographical references will crowd out almost everything else. But in the writing of elementary textbooks in nearly every field of study it has long been standard practice not to enumerate the books, monographs, and articles which constitute the background and basis of the particular field involved. It seems to me, therefore, that the accepted method may well be used in the presentation of social problems to students of sociology. In carrying out this idea it has been my aim to retain the essentials while eliminating unnecessary details.

The general plan is based upon the assumption that social problems can be most easily understood by considering them in the social and historical setting in which they occur. Accordingly, the characteristics of the present-day community and the processes of social change are described in connection with each problem or group of problems treated. A few figures are given to indicate the magnitude of the problem, but long statistical tabulations are avoided. The sociological viewpoint is maintained throughout.

The selection and preparation of the materials included have been under way for a long time. In this work I have been aided, directly and indirectly, knowingly and unknowingly, by many of my teachers, friends, colleagues, and associates in the field of sociology. To each of these I am deeply grateful.

CARL M. ROSENQUIST



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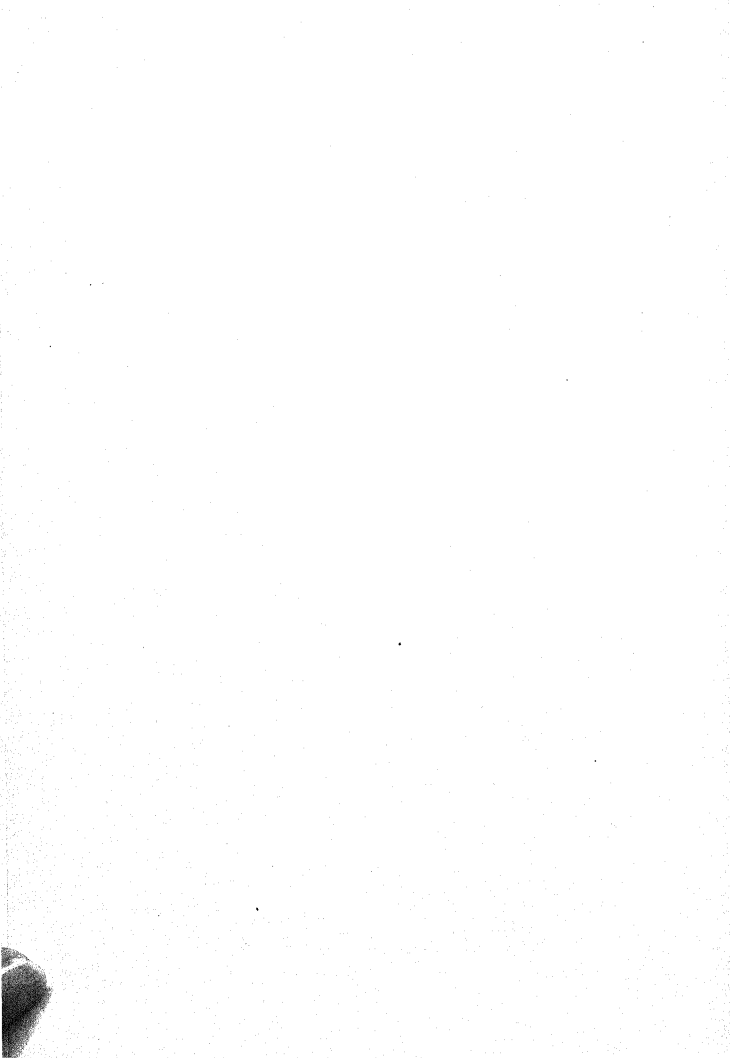
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## WHAT IS A SOCIAL PROBLEM?

THE term "social problem" has been used to describe situations and activities ranging from the operation of the international economic system to the behavior of a truant schoolboy. The choice of such a term requires, therefore, some explanation; first, in order to discover what the word means in common usage and, second, to limit that meaning to practical dimensions.

Obviously a social problem refers to a condition or process of society which is, from some point of view, undesirable. Such a condition or process may, then, be judged wrong or abnormal. It means that society in some respect is failing to perform the function or to achieve the end expected of it. Corollary is the idea that society can function properly or, at least, can be made so to function—that there is or can be a satisfactory society. Contemplation of a social problem, therefore, carries with it the notion that a solution may be found.

Implicit also is the idea of social change. Indeed, the idea of social change may quite properly be assumed to have preceded the idea of social problems. If society were static, unchanging and unchangeable, there would be no use in talking of its problems or defects. We should then be concerned only with the business of adapting ourselves as well as possible to the inevitable, as we do to climate and altitude. At the same time that we accept the idea of change, however, we must also assume the continuance of some stability, otherwise we could never hope to bring about permanent improvements in our social life.

Those who speak of social problems believe not only in social change, but also in the possibility of directing such change toward desired ends. They believe in progress. They

see society as a human creation justifiably existing in any particular form or phase only so long as it serves the needs of its members. From time to time it may degenerate or at some point fall short of meeting the demands placed upon it. The circumstances connected with such failures of society are defined as social problems.

Since obviously differences of opinion exist as to how society may best serve the needs of its members, there arises, as a further question for consideration in connection with the definition of a social problem, the question of what are the proper needs of the members of society. Here are involved such questions as the following: What do individuals need or want? What objectives do they seek in life? How may society aid individuals in reaching their objectives? Are the objectives of individuals conflicting? If so, what can society do to meet the ensuing difficulty?

#### MOTIVATION

A casual examination of the objects for which human beings strive in American society shows them to be of two general classes: first, those which contribute directly to physical well-being, such as food, clothing, and shelter, and, second, those which contribute to social well-being, such as membership in an honorary fraternity, the respect of the neighbors, and the wearing of stylish dress. Offhand it appears that the first of these classes of objectives is the more important, since without them life could not be sustained. Clearly no society which did not permit its members to gratify these fundamental desires could long survive. Yet for a given individual or, under some circumstances, for many individuals in society the second class of satisfactions is more important than the first. The suicide who prefers death to the disgrace of failure furnishes an extreme example. Practically every person accepts physical discomfort and even suffering in order to maintain his social standing. Instances are too common to require mention.

It will be apparent that in the attempt to gain the objectives described the members of society come into conflict with each

other. As concerns economic goods, for example, the final product, ready for the consumer, becomes available, with few exceptions, only after it has been worked upon by a number of different persons, each performing a different function. To produce economic goods, then, there must be co-operation, which is the essence of society. Fairly successful co-operation for this purpose has been carried on from the earliest known societies down to the present time. Even savages hunt and fish together. Modern industrial society manifests co-operation to a degree involving so many people that most of them may be unaware of the participation of the rest. Co-operation breaks down, not in the processes of production, but in the processes of distribution of the product, for the possession of which the various participants present rival claims. When workers and employers fight in strikes and lock-outs, production ceases.

Conflict over the distribution of economic goods seems not to have been lessened as a result of the greater efficiency of modern industry as compared with that of the past. On the contrary, conflict appears to be in some respects intensified. Therefore it may be concluded that our desire for economic goods is not based solely upon their usefulness in maintaining physical well-being. At any rate, there seems to be no general disposition on part of those who already have large incomes translatable into economic goods to cease their efforts to enlarge those incomes still further. The reason is, of course, to be found in the second class of satisfactions sought by human beings, namely, social well-being, or status.

#### THE STRUGGLE FOR STATUS

It is a fact often observed that in our society the possession of wealth confers high status. It will be noted, however, that "wealth" in this sense is purely relative. If every man's possessions could be magically increased a millionfold, there would still be poor people. The ordinary working man of today has conveniences and luxuries unknown even to the mightiest monarchs of a few hundred years ago, yet his status

remains comparatively low, because there are so many others who have much more than he. Anything like the attainment of enough in the way of income is therefore impossible. An honorary fraternity embracing all mankind ceases to be honorary. Social status is obtainable only at the expense of one's fellows.

The importance of economic goods as the means of sustaining life should not be overlooked, however, and since one of the incidents of the struggle for status is that the defeated lose not only status but also the means of life, it might be argued that here at least society should intervene. While it might not be possible to eliminate the struggle for status, it might be possible to mitigate the struggle for the necessities of life by assuring every individual a supply of food, clothing, shelter and medical care. It may be observed that some writers<sup>1</sup> on social problems regard physical well-being as the basic requirement of social welfare. So often is this view stressed that it may be taken as accepted that society should see to it that its citizens lack for none of the essentials: food, clothing, and shelter. These are the elementary needs of human beings; no society can be regarded as satisfactory which does not furnish them.

There is some justification for the view that the denial of the means of subsistence to some members of society is not due to a shortage of resources or inadequacy of techniques. It may be a by-product of the struggle for status, a condition which would correct itself if that struggle did not exist or if status were unrelated to economic values. "Status," as used here, refers primarily to what may be in general described by the synonyms "social standing" or "position on the social scale." No society has ever been observed in which social distinctions of this sort did not exist.<sup>2</sup> They are found from the most primitive levels of savagery to the most sophisticated stages of modern urban society. No one can live long in our society without being impressed with the importance of its

<sup>1</sup> See Folsom, Joseph Kirk, *The Family*, 1934, pp. 174-5.

<sup>2</sup> See Sorokin, Pitirim, *Social Mobility*, 1927, pp. 12-17.

stratifications. From his own experience, every individual acquires notions of what his status is, what it ought to be, and what he would like it to be. The extent to which he is able to meet his own expectations with regard to status determines largely his self-respect and self-esteem.

Although a social scale with several levels is common to all societies, the basis of status varies from society to society. The possession of wealth is not universally the means of acquiring high social position. Other characteristics or activities may serve the same purpose. As examples may be mentioned color, birth, education, and military exploit. It appears, therefore, that while status may be inherent in the nature of society itself, the means of status are themselves socially determined.

If this view is correct, it might be maintained that our society is at fault in that it creates for itself a problem by permitting the utilization of the necessities of life as counters in the struggle for status. If these goods were valued only for their utility as consumers' goods, persons who already have enough of them would cease to acquire more and would thereby give economic opportunity to others not so fortunate. Thus a more equitable distribution of economic goods might be provided for. There can be no absolute certainty, of course, that such improvement would follow. The concern of people for their future needs causes them to store up economic goods in the form of purchasing power represented by money or by durable, negotiable property. Owing to the uncertainty of the future, no one can ever be sure that he will have enough to last through the period of illness or unemployment which may precede his death. A thrifty and foresighted man therefore continues to accumulate as large a proportion of his income as possible in order to be as well prepared as the circumstances permit for any contingency. If goods were valued only for their utility, the economic struggle might remain as keen as ever, and there would probably still be a class of persons unable to support themselves through their own efforts. Economic technology and the control of population increases have, however, reached a development so advanced as to render such an outcome unlikely.



Insofar as it is possible under the limitations of our power to produce economic goods, society might guarantee an income sufficient to support life to every individual. It is absurd to say that all families can be self-supporting and yet to maintain that society can not guarantee the support of all. This would confine the economic struggle to that portion of individual incomes which is above the subsistence level, thus preventing starvation and other physical ills due to insufficient income. Society would thereby meet its primary obligation.

This plan, however, is no more certain of success than the preceding. The objection would be raised at once that the great mass of mankind will work only upon threat of starvation; that as soon as they are assured of enough to eat for the rest of their lives they will at once quit their jobs. Thus is raised again the problem of motivation and the question of whether society may be able to provide an incentive to work which will induce every man to put forth his best efforts. If, for example, men were accorded high social status for contributing extensively to the production of the group instead of for taking a large part of the product for themselves; quite a different attitude toward useful work would be developed. Possibly in a society with such attitudes economic want would entirely disappear. Certain related social problems, such as child labor and crimes against property, might also be solved incidentally, though doubtless others, such as actual overproduction, might arise instead.

#### THE CONCEPT OF AN IDEAL SOCIETY

All these speculations lead to the same conclusion or lack of conclusion. A society is judged as good or bad according to the degree in which it meets the expectations of its members. Their judgment as to what is good or bad is the result of the cultural influence to which they have been subjected. In a perfectly homogeneous society, therefore, no question as to its goodness or badness would arise. There would be no social problems. The appearance of social problems is possible only in a society already affected by change. In such a society there

will be differing opinions as to what society should do. A few will be so extreme in their views as to advocate the complete overthrow of the social organization. These are the radicals and revolutionists. The vast majority of the people are likely to be more or less content with the existing state of affairs. The liberals demand rather widespread reforms; the conservatives believe that a little patchwork here and there is at most all that is necessary. Both conservatives and liberals describe "social problems" as ways in which the social set-up is wrong or defective and which should be changed for the general benefit.

Implicit, if not explicit, in the situation is the concept of an ideal society, or at least of the best possible society, from which the conditions known as social problems are deviations. If these faults are corrected, so runs the reasoning, society will serve its intended purpose and approach the ideal. The concept of the social problem is therefore dependent upon the concept of a perfect or, at least, a perfectible society. There are many ideas of perfect society current in social literature.<sup>3</sup> Certain fundamental similarities among them are observable; these presumably are copied from actual present-day society. The differences may have their origin in the peculiar experiences of the various proponents; certainly they do not represent anything more final or absolute than these experiences. No reason can be found for thinking that there is at present any scientific basis for the ideal society. It is a variable, itself conditioned by the social life of its times. It is possible that social problems themselves are culturally determined—that we identify and define certain conditions as social problems because custom so dictates. Certainly it is true, for example, that social conditions from our point of view were infinitely worse in Europe during the Middle Ages than they are now. People of that time appear to have accepted these conditions with little protest. No one wrote on child labor or public health. There was too much concern with the next world for anyone to have

<sup>3</sup> See Hertzler, Joyce O., *The History of Utopian Thought*, 1923; and Mumford, Lewis, *The Story of Utopias*, 1922.

much time for this one. Quite likely sin was regarded as the chief obstacle to a perfect society. It may be noted, therefore, that the social problems which seem significant to us do not necessarily reflect those conditions in society which would be regarded as the most unsatisfactory from all viewpoints. Probably there is some relation between fundamental need and the object of our concern, but the relation may be and often is quite remote, as was indicated in the reference to the Middle Ages. What we regard as social problems are determined for us by society, just as are fashions in dress or other temporary phases of social life. When we buy a garment, applying our notions of fashion, we have the impression that we are exercising choice, that we desire the current style on account of a real preference, little realizing, except on second thought, that we are but following the folkways. Similarly, as concerns social problems, we feel as if we were selecting the problems to which we address our attention, but actually they are determined for us by the social environment.

#### SCIENTIFIC DETERMINATION OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

It follows that scientific definition of a social problem in general is practically impossible. In spite of this difficulty, many sociologists, desiring to avoid the implication that they are reformers instead of scientists, have endeavored to account for social problems according to some general scheme or formula which will escape reference to the welfare aspect. One such explanation is in terms of social change. In this explanation the assumption is made that human beings are adjusted satisfactorily to any social condition that has existed for a long time. When any aspect of social life changes, especially if it changes rapidly, it becomes a social problem.

A modification of this explanation is based on the concept of cultural lag.<sup>4</sup> Under this theory culture is considered an organic whole, so closely interrelated in all its parts that change in one part throws others out of adjustment, especially those

<sup>4</sup> Ogburn, William F., *Social Change*, 1922; and Folsom, Joseph K., *The Family*, 1934, pp. 235-6.

parts which "lag" behind the general march of change. Failure of any aspect of society to change, to keep up with the times, makes it a social problem.

An examination of the facts shows the error of these conclusions. Social change in the right direction does not constitute a social problem. But which direction is right? It depends upon who is speaking. Higher wages, shorter hours, security in the job are changes favored by a working man but almost always opposed by employers. The latter would not usually regard the necessity for any large-scale change in this direction as a social problem of great importance. The employees would look upon the change as highly beneficial.

#### SOCIAL CONFLICT

It might be suggested that the only way in which social change can be used to explain social problems is to define a social problem simply as social conflict, or situations which bring into opposition relatively large portions of the population. It would necessarily include situations in which the two sides are organized, as in war and in labor disputes, as well as situations in which a large number of individuals engage singly or in small groups, as in crime or divorce. This view, however, requires postulating nature as an enemy in such well-recognized problems as public health and infectious disease, a postulate which seems far-fetched. This view is objective in that, if adhered to, it merely recognizes and describes the conflict, taking no sides and having no concern for the outcome. It would necessarily omit from consideration many of the more important social problems now in the public mind.

#### SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION

The concept of social disorganization has also been used to explain social problems.<sup>5</sup> In any society not completely static changes take place which necessarily disrupt old and established elements in social life. The disruption so created is re-

<sup>5</sup> Elliott, Mabel A., and Merrill, Francis E., *Social Disorganization*, 1934, Chapters I and II.

garded as a social problem. That such disruption is often connected with social problems no one can deny. The changes in family life may be cited as an example. That such disruptions do cause social problems testifies to the organic character of society, the interdependence and the interrelationship of its parts. When one part changes without compensating changes in other parts, friction or disharmony results. It must be noted, however, that the process of social reorganization goes on at the same time and at the same pace as social disorganization, and that actually the two are not easily distinguished from each other. There is a pronounced tendency among writers to separate them on a basis presumed to be scientific, but which is only normative. For example, the new form of family is replacing the old at the same rate as the old is giving way to the new. Is the accompanying social problem one of social disorganization or of reorganization? Obviously both processes are involved equally. The conservative individual tends to see the disorganization; the reformer, the reorganization. Furthermore, in every textbook on the subject social problems are mentioned which cannot be bent to fit into this scheme. There is, for example, the problem of health. Admitted now as a serious problem, it receives more attention than ever, although people by and large are healthier now than they have ever been in the past, when health was considered scarcely a problem at all. Furthermore, there are some social activities in which social change is very rapid, involving a maximum of disorganization and reorganization, but which, since no objection is encountered, are not thought of as presenting social problems. Here may be mentioned styles and fashions in clothing, decoration, and recreation. The waste incidentally resulting from these changes may appeal to some observers as a problem in economy, but the changes themselves are not seriously taken as social problems.

#### SOCIAL PROBLEMS AS PATHOLOGY

The most familiar explanation of social problems uses the analogy between the biological and social organisms. The

study of pathology presupposes the existence of an organism in which the symptoms of disease may be observed. For the biologist the organism is a plant or an animal; for the social pathologist, a society.<sup>6</sup> The study of pathology further presupposes a condition of normality in the organism from which disease may be regarded as a deviation. As to the meaning of normality, it will suffice at this point to say that it ordinarily refers to the operation of the various organs in such a way as to secure or promote the welfare of the organism as a whole. Since the nature of the functions involved is dependent upon the structure of the organs, it follows that normality and, consequently, pathology, vary according to the kind of organism concerned. In the biological field, this means that each species of plant or animal has its own peculiar set of diseases; in sociology, it means that social ills differ from society to society and, since societies change, from time to time within the same society.

#### NORMAL SOCIETY

In the study of pathological manifestations, it is necessary first to know and recognize normality. Such knowledge and recognition can be secured only from observation of the organism the diseases of which are to be studied. Here, as previously, it may be assumed that society exists for its members and that they have certain ideas as to what society should provide. To the extent that these expectations are realized, society may be spoken of as normal or, for the purposes of the analogy, as healthy. This conception of normality does not necessarily find its expression in actual experience. Probably no society has ever provided complete satisfaction for all of its members. Yet the requirement remains as an ideal, from which we measure deviations, referred to as social ills.

When this concept of normality is compared with that of biology, a conspicuous difference is at once apparent. The

<sup>6</sup> That society is not an organism in the biological sense need not concern us here, but society must be seen as a mechanism of interacting parts if the concept of pathology is to be applied to a study of its ills.

animal organism is in health when as a whole it is functioning perfectly; the social organism is in health when all of its members are functioning perfectly. The difference is more than a play upon words, although it might be maintained that no organism can be considered healthy as a whole, if it has diseased parts. It must be emphasized that the social organism exists for the benefit of the individuals who compose it, rather than for itself alone. Conceivably, a society might be healthy according to standards similar to those used in biology—that is, the group as a whole might be wealthy, successful in war, increasing in size, and long of life—but if the internal organization is based upon a system of exploitation in which some of the people make life miserable for the rest, the society is sick according to the usually accepted sociological viewpoint.

#### THE MEANING OF PATHOLOGY

In the preceding paragraphs, we have avoided the question of the precise meaning of pathology by assuming it to mean the study of disease. Clearly, this is mere tautology, for which must be substituted a more accurate description, if the word is to have a place in this discussion. The fact that the word is used in the biological sciences does not confer upon it unquestionable scientific validity; indeed there is reason to believe that its definition at the hands of the biologists leaves it outside the list of scientific concepts. A brief examination into the biological meaning of the term will serve to clarify the sense in which it is here used.

The discussion of pathology as ordinarily carried on makes it appear that disease is an enemy of the biological organism, existing outside the organism and always waiting for a favorable moment to launch an attack, just as a wolf prowls around a flock of sheep, waiting for the shepherd to relax his vigilance long enough to permit a raid on his charges. This notion has doubtless been strengthened by the discovery that micro-organisms are found in connection with many types of disease. To the human mind, with its strong predilection for personification, the minute organisms have appeared in the rôle of an

attacking army bent on the destruction of its victims. Actually, the picture thus presented is far from the facts.

Diseases are not entities: the classification of diseases is purely a matter of convenience: what are known as diseases are the results of what happens when the organism comes in contact with inimical agents.<sup>7</sup>

The word disease, then, does not properly refer to an attacking force, but to the response of the organism to certain conditions threatening its safety. The response consists of a series of physiological changes, described as the symptoms of the disease. They are but the indications that the organism has suffered from an injury or infection and is attempting to repair the damage. The symptoms are beneficent in character in the sense that they show active resistance on the part of the organism. To attempt to remove them may harm the organism instead of benefiting it. Disease may be tentatively defined therefore as a process of readjustment.

Since the organism reacts differently to different kinds of injuries, corresponding differences in disease are observed. These differences are utilized in constructing classifications of diseases for purposes of diagnosis and treatment. Diseases do not naturally fall into groups and varieties; they are placed there by pathologists for convenience in dealing with them. Often the so-called typical form of a disease is never observed in reality. Cases are diagnosed upon the degree of resemblance to the typical form, not upon absolute identity.

#### THE CONCEPT OF NORMALITY

Since biologists invariably define disease in terms of deviation from a state of health, it becomes imperative to define health also. The definition of health as freedom from disease, is, of course, of no value. Substitution of the word "normality" does not remove the difficulty, for normality has no more specific meaning than health. It cannot mean the average condi-

<sup>7</sup> White, William A., *The Meaning of Disease*, p. 171. Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1926.



tion of the organism, for perfect health is rarely if ever observed. Since normality does not exist as an actual condition, it must obviously refer to an imaginary condition, found only in the observer's mind. A brief inquiry shows this to be the case. Health or normality is an ideal state unattained and probably unattainable, but regarded as eminently desirable. It is taken for granted that good health and, consequently, a long life, are among the chief objectives of man, and that anything which militates against its attainment is pathological. This points plainly to the subjective and hedonistic elements in the definition of normality. From his own experience, the individual comes to certain conclusions regarding his own welfare. Sympathetically transferring his personal feelings to others, he produces a general notion of the kind of physical condition he considers ideal. To this he gives the name of normality. Not satisfied with this, he extends his anthropomorphism to all other forms of life, postulating norms for them as well as for himself. With these norms established for a given species, he can proceed at once to a study of its pathology. This is not to say that normality thus determined is without value. On the contrary, the results have amply justified working from postulates of this sort, as the triumphs of pathologists have shown many times; but it can hardly be maintained that the procedure is scientific, if by scientific we mean objective. The process necessarily starts with the assumption that life is good, an assumption easy to accept but impossible to prove. Moreover, there is a body of opinion challenging the assumption in opposition to the majority.

This fairly well describes the status of the "pathology" which sociology has borrowed from biology. It is scarcely necessary to say that the use of the term by the borrowers is greatly similar to that of the originators. As a basis for the study of social pathology, a "healthy" society is set up as a norm, from which deviations are observed. Unhappily for the comfort of sociologists, it appears to be much more difficult to arrive at an agreement as to the health of societies than as to the health of individuals. In this connection society is, of course, contem-

plated in its organic aspects, that is, it is considered as a whole composed of interrelated parts. Yet it is impossible to overlook the fact that there can be no social "health" apart from the health of individual members of society, and the further fact that the nature of the organization of society is determined by the members themselves. For example, it is possible to find described in history societies which have proved themselves very able in conflict with other societies and with nature, so that they have flourished and endured over long periods. From the viewpoint of society as an organism such a group might well be considered "healthy" or normal, whereas its internal organization might be of such a sort as to keep the vast majority of the members in a state of social degradation. On the other hand, it is possible to find societies which, because of looser controls, are less efficient and less secure, but in which the individual members find life highly agreeable. There can be hardly a doubt as to which society the ordinary individual would prefer to live in, and probably we cannot consider that society diseased which is, from the individual's point of view, the most desirable of all.

#### WHAT IS SOCIAL WELFARE?

The difficulties in judging the state of health of a particular society by the criterion of individual welfare are all but insurmountable. Only a few of society's activities can be truly said to contribute to the welfare of all. The successful control of infectious diseases, protection against the effect of catastrophe, and the conservation of natural resources appear at first glance to contribute to the general welfare without injuring anyone. Yet this is not the case. No matter how objectionable a state of society may be, there are always at least a few people who are well adjusted to it and whose well-being would be adversely affected by change. Disease and death are evils in popular opinion, but they provide good livings for physicians and grave diggers, respectively. Uncontrolled fire is an evil, but without its occasional appearance fire insurance agents, night watchmen, and firemen would have to find new employments. No

matter what the condition or how bad it may be, there is always a group which profits by its continuance. For the members of this group the condition in question is normal, not pathological. For them the *status quo* is satisfactory, if not highly desirable. To them trouble arises from the fact that someone may think the source of their living is socially pathological and seek to eliminate it.

Perhaps we could disregard the interests of the grave diggers, insurance agents, and other small groups which depend for a living upon social ills. We may say that the welfare of the individual must always be sacrificed to the welfare of the group, and thus retain a general view of social health. This takes us back to society as the chief end, instead of the individual. However, when it comes to most serious problems, those involving human relations such as divorce, child labor, crime, and poverty, the interested individuals form groups too large to ignore. Apparently as a race we thrive on each other's weaknesses. What is one man's meat is another man's poison.

In the problems just mentioned we observe a definite conflict of interests. One group may be fairly well satisfied with conditions as they are. This group is conservative. Another group is dissatisfied and wants a change. This group is radical or revolutionary. The inertia of the folkways, together with the greater influence of the socially successful, usually enables a comparatively small group to keep a large one more or less in subjection, and thus to maintain a condition approximating the *status quo*. The conflict indicated has existed for a long time. The two sides have built up extensive rationalizations so nearly complete as to deserve the name of philosophies. The members of each group have outlined an entire world plan into which they fit their own interests as an essential part. The sociologist who ventures into the fray invariably finds himself taking sides. He must evaluate the conflicting rationalizations and reject one or the other. His experiences as a human being are likely to affect his judgment. He casts his vote and his lot with one side and supports the existing order; or with the other side and advocates social change. If he supposes he

can bring the struggle to an end, he will be greatly disappointed, for compromise will not yield a final solution of the social conflict. Contentment does not come from having plenty; it comes from having more than one's neighbor. It cannot be shown that every additional unit of wealth adds to one's physical comfort. After a certain point in the process of adding, more units may even become a burden. We continue to accumulate them because they symbolize that for which we all strive, namely, social status. High status being a matter of position on the social scale, it can be achieved only at the expense of one's fellow men. Only a small group can reach the highest level, and only one person can occupy the topmost point. Even he would probably be worried for fear he might not be able to retain his place.

Some students of human behavior may object to this conclusion. Just as men do not always work for what is plainly to their economic interest, so they do not always work for social status. Not everyone in a humble position, it may be argued, is displeased with his lot. Large masses of social inferiors, such as the peasants of Europe and the peons of Mexico, may be said to be comparatively well satisfied with their position in life. The sociologist who turns reformer to help those at the lower end of the social scale soon discovers a remarkable apathy on the part of the very groups whose cause he espouses. His job becomes doubly difficult. He must arouse discontent in the exploited before he can lead an attack on the exploiters. If he could be quite sure such an attack would be successful, his activities might be justified. It might be presumed, for example, that the people do not know what is good for them. They must be told before they can seek that good. If the attempt to win it should fail, the last state of the oppressed group may be worse than the first. Its members will thenceforth know what they are missing. Should a sociologist recognize as pathological a case of oppression of which the victim is unaware? Should he disturb the happiness of an ignorant peasantry to reveal to them a higher standard of living which only a few of them will be able to attain?

The same problem appears in somewhat different form in the case of persons whose contentment is not so much the consequence of ignorance as of their refusal to accept the common standards of the world. The genuinely religious person often qualifies for membership in this group. He considers his life on earth as nothing more than a prelude to an existence of infinite duration in the hereafter. In the light of a concept so vast as infinity the joys and sorrows of earthly humanity sink into insignificance. Some religionists go so far as to deny the reality of all earthly things, material and immaterial. To these persons, of course, all social reform and, for that matter, science, is the pursuit of a phantom, hardly even worth deploring, since it is only a waste of worthless time. They may be the unknowing victims of economic exploitation or a polluted water supply. Is their condition properly to be regarded as presenting a social problem?

In another portion of the population we encounter the neurotic and the mentally diseased, whose conceptions of the meaning of life and whose adjustments to it are so different from those of the majority of the people among whom they live that they fall far short of meeting social expectations. Sometimes they are unduly depressed; sometimes unduly elated. We say they suffer from delusions because they see the world as something different from that ordinarily reported. It may be they are quite as logical in their own way as the rest of us are in ours. They have started with different assumptions or have proceeded by different roads to their conclusions. Who shall say they are wrong? They are in the minority, to be sure. They do not fit. Yet in another society they might be perfectly at home. What should be the attitude of the sociologist toward the problem presented by these persons? Should he diagnose their condition as pathological, and attempt to induce them to accept the ideas of the existing system on the theory that their own ideas are erroneous?

The words "existing system" may perhaps be assumed to refer to a condition of stability. From the above-mentioned considerations, it seems apparent that unless something of this

sort is taken as the foundation it is impossible to speak meaningfully of social problems at all. The term implies some kind of norm from which there may be injurious deviations, describable as pathological. Perhaps we may be on solid ground through a recognition of the capitalistic system and its accompaniments as normal. We may then deal with its several parts, treating as problems those which do not function smoothly. This, it seems, is what the more reputable sociologist actually does. In his discussion of child labor, for example, he finds that one of its many evils is the interference of early employment with the child's opportunities for vocational training. The lack of training in youth forces the individual as an adult to accept unskilled, low-paid work, which reduces his standard of living so that his own children must be sent to the mill in their turn. Back of this line of argument is the assumption that individuals must necessarily compete with one another and that the more highly trained will get the best jobs. All of which is in accord with the principles of the capitalistic system. It may be observed in passing, however, that it is impossible to give every individual an advantage over all the others by education or by any other means. Social work which rehabilitates families, cripples, or other groups does nothing more than help some at the expense of the rest. It is little more than an irregular makeshift whereby society returns to the victims of its operation a portion of their losses. It is a form of interference with the workings of the existing system, which, if carried to the point of eliminating all social evils, would destroy the system itself. The great game of capitalism, if played strictly according to the rules, would soon end as a result of one player getting all the chips. Capitalism remains in operation only by virtue of its imperfections.

The temptation to fall back upon some guiding principle, such as the greatest good of the greatest number, is difficult to avoid. If society cannot be made to operate so as to please everyone, then perhaps it should at least please as many as possible. Unfortunately, such a principle cannot be applied without acceptance also of the idea that human satisfactions differ

only in quantity (for example, a good dinner may be the equal of an evening of grand opera), and, further, of the notion that all men are equal in all respects significant for social life. Neither the facts in the case nor the prevailing tendencies of human thought will permit the acceptance of these assumptions.

Representations of ideal societies make allowances for inequalities; in some cases even stipulating their maintenance as a part of the social order. Granting the possibility of its existence, we are forced to conclude that a society in which all men are in all respects equal is not necessarily a desirable society. What then is the most desirable society? What are we to take as the norms or ideals from which we may diagnose our social ills? The answers offered us in the numerous utopias in our literature are by no means unanimous. Some have war and others have peace; some are capitalistic and others are communistic; some are religious and others are unreligious. All have forms of family and community life. Each of them reflects its author's ideas as to what was wrong with the society he lived in. The variety presented makes instantly clear the fact that even in the planning of a new society, in which the authors are limited only by the powers of their own imagination, no agreement in form is possible. And if we were to question all the people in the world as to which of the several existing societies they would prefer, we should probably find no conclusive vote for any.

Another difficulty in the way of finding a normal or "healthy" society is the nature and extent of the differences found in societies, both real and imaginary. Some of these differences are so great as to suggest, borrowing the biological term, that each society belongs to a separate species. Such a situation would indicate different pathologies for the various types of societies, and something of the sort may be observed in the literature of the subject. We find, for example, that poverty is referred to as a disease of capitalism. However desirable it might be from the logical standpoint to classify societies into species and treat their pathologies separately, practical consid-

erations render such procedure impossible. It may be doubted, in the first place, whether a classification of societies would have distinctness comparable with classifications of animal organisms. In all probability, no clear borderline between the several types could be found. Each type would shade by imperceptibly small degrees into the succeeding type, so that numerous individual societies would remain unclassifiable. The creation of intermediate classes would only increase the difficulty.

In the second place, the social organism is not nearly so stable as the animal organism. It responds to changed external conditions with internal changes or adaptations which become integral and fixed parts of its make-up. It is the creation of the human beings who compose it, subject to their desires and even their whims. Sometimes societies in times of stress undergo sudden changes of so extensive a character as to present the appearance of a totally new society, arising from the ruins of the old. Actually such changes are less far-reaching than they seem, yet nothing comparable to them is found in the biological organism from which we take our analogy. For social revolution would be equaled in the animal world only if the wolf, finding game scarce and grass abundant, should suddenly turn into a sheep in order to survive. The study of pathology, if it is to bear even the slightest mark of scientific validity, must have as its object an organism of relatively fixed characteristics. With revolution it can have nothing to do. It must therefore necessarily presuppose the continuation of the social system with which it deals. Unfortunately, even this presupposition finds scanty support in the facts of real life.

#### CONCLUSION

In view of all these difficulties, it may well be wondered how social problems can be studied at all. Obviously we have no norm, real or imaginary, upon which we can agree. Nor is it likely, in view of the constantly changing character of society, that a norm can be established. How can we know what in society is really pathological? The only answer is: we do not and cannot know.



There is, however, a way in which social problems may be studied without answering these questions. They may be treated, not as the study of variations from a norm, but as manifestations of society itself. From this viewpoint popular recognition of any social condition or process as bad, followed by an attempt to eliminate or cure it, serves as the criterion for its inclusion in a study of social problems. The writer merely accepts the judgment of public opinion. This is the method to be followed in this book. The question to be answered is not, then, whether poverty or any other condition is bad for society, and if so what is to be done about it, but what are the conditions of society which large numbers of people regard as harmful and remediable. Is poverty found among them? If so, what are its manifestations? How does it affect the individual? What is being done to remedy it? To these matters we address ourselves. Social problems are nothing more nor less than those conditions or aspects of society which considerable numbers of people are trying to change.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> "A social problem . . . is determined by group sanction, being the judgment of a group concerning the efficiency of a type of social organization in its structure or function. It is within the realm of folkways, mores, and opinions." Lundberg, George A., Bain, Read, and Anderson, Nels, Editors, *Trends in American Sociology*; Phelps, Harold A., "Sociology and Social Work," p. 332. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1929. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

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## AMERICAN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

SINCE the social problems to be treated in this book include only those conditions generally conceded to be defects in modern American society, it seems desirable to present in the beginning a brief description of that society. This is done not only with the idea of giving the student a clear picture of the essential features of our social life, but also for the purpose of pointing out a basic conflict within it, which, in the opinion of the author, is responsible for many of our social difficulties.

## THE EMPHASIS UPON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

The most conspicuous aspect of American life at present is its intense preoccupation with economic affairs. This is so obvious as to require no demonstration. Although we recognize the existence of noneconomic values, these are relegated to a position of secondary importance. We feel apologetic for accepting them and consider it necessary to defend these values by absurd attempts to translate them into monetary terms. Thus we find education endorsed because of the high incomes earned by college graduates; works of art compared on the basis of their cost; and even life itself evaluated in dollars to support a safety-first campaign.

We have come to expect that the economic motive will dominate the activities of the normal individual, determining his choice of all matters in which he is not restrained by insufficient income. We expect every man to select the most remunerative occupation open to him, to secure the largest possible financial return for his services or for his goods, to invest his savings as profitably as circumstances permit. His success in life is measured by the amount of money or property he is able to accumulate. This applies not only to the business man,

whose frank aim it is to make money, but also in large degree to the artist and the professional worker, whose primary concern, respectively, is presumed to be self-expression and the rendering of public service. It is true that some persons do not always follow the approved pattern with regard to economic behavior. Such persons are looked upon with distrust. The kleptomaniac puzzles us, not so much because he steals, but because apparently he derives no economic advantage from his actions. If anyone not bound to us by personal ties offers to do us a favor, we immediately begin speculating as to what economic return he is trying to secure. We usually do not expect to find altruism, or any behavior prompted by considerations other than economic gain. On the rare occasions when we seem to encounter it, we are inclined to suspect the altruist of being mentally deranged, or at best to be acting on an economic motive successfully hidden from our view.

This is not to say that we disapprove of what we designate as altruistic behavior. On the contrary, we advocate it strenuously and, judging by such purely monetary measurements as donations to charity, a good deal of altruism is found among us. But although we approve of such behavior and praise it in the abstract, we recognize that it has few sanctions in our culture. To the question, "Why should one contribute to the Red Cross?" we have no really convincing answer. Our sole appeal is to sympathy. Herein appears the conflict mentioned in the introductory paragraph of this chapter.

Every thinking person recognizes the importance of co-operation among men. Without it we should soon perish. At the same time, we place so large a premium on purely selfish, individualistic action as to make sacrifices on behalf of the group extremely difficult. For example, an employer of children may well appreciate the objectionable character of child labor. He would probably prefer to employ adults if he thought he could afford to do so; in other words, if he could change without giving up his profits or, perhaps, the business itself. With the co-operation of all employers child labor could be eliminated, but such co-operation, running counter to the current objectives

of industry, has scant chance of success. The resulting situation may be appropriately described as a conflict between group and individual, with the individual at present in the ascendant position. Even while praising altruism, we seek our individual advantage. We dare not work in the interest of the group, for fear that the group will sooner or later cast us out to shift for ourselves.

### THE MACHINE TECHNIQUE

Foremost among the devices for carrying on our economic affairs is the machine. By means of it we are enabled to utilize extensively non-human sources of energy in the processes of economic production. It is, of course, not entirely new. To a limited extent, machinery has been used for thousands of years. The power of falling water was used to lift water for irrigation long before the beginning of the Christian Era. In the main, however, the muscles of men and of domestic animals supplied the energy for the work of the world until the invention of the steam engine in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Since that time developments have been extremely rapid, notably in western Europe, the United States, and, more recently, in Japan and Russia. The steam engine permitted the transformation into mechanical power of the energy released from burning coal. Subsequent developments and discoveries have partly replaced coal with oil, and improvements in the technique of utilizing water power have increased vastly the usefulness of this ancient source of energy. Flexibility in the distribution of power from the point of production to the point of application has been achieved within the past few decades through the use of electrical energy, which can be economically transported for considerable distances through wires. Electricity has the further advantage of being applicable in power units of any desired size.

Stimulated by the availability of almost unlimited amounts of power, inventors have produced innumerable devices to replace the human hand in manufacture. Among the early important inventions which conspicuously replaced workers are

the spinning jenny, the mule, the power loom, and the Jacquard loom. It was largely as a result of these and related machines that the industrial revolution in England began, and it is interesting to note that textile manufacturing has repeatedly served as the beginning from which a country's industry in other lines later developed. One reason is, perhaps, the fact that the textile industry uses relatively small quantities of such basic materials as steel, tin, copper, wood, and glass. Another reason is that it requires large amounts of labor and relatively small amounts of power. In the early days of industrial development, labor is usually plentiful and cheap, whereas power is still scarce and expensive.

#### DIVISION OF LABOR

The machine technique encourages or, possibly, requires a division of the process of manufacture into a number of separate processes, through which the raw material is gradually, step by step, converted into the finished product. In connection with these separate processes, many new occupations have arisen. The new occupations differ from those of the pre-machine age in that they consist of relatively high skills in the performance of brief and simple tasks. Usually the occupation can be easily learned, since it involves but few different actions. Through numerous repetitions of these actions, superior skill is readily acquired. It is significant, however, that the skill demanded of the factory worker consists largely of quickness and dexterity in the execution of a few simple movements, whereas the skill of the hand worker resides in his ability to plan and execute all movements that go into the process of making a finished article from raw material. In the latter case, several years of apprenticeship may be necessary for the individual worker to learn the arts of his craft; in the former, he may become proficient in a few weeks or months. This difference is of great importance in connection with social status or position as it is related to occupation.

The division of labor is not limited to the actual manufacturing process alone. It has also separated the activities of

selling, financing, management, and ownership from each other and from manufacturing. The members of the sales force may never have been inside the factory; the production manager may have only the vaguest notions as to how customers are persuaded to buy or how the anticipated demand for the product is calculated. The ownership of a single enterprise may be and often is minutely divided among thousands of people, few or none of whom are related to it in any other capacity.

#### INTERDEPENDENCE

Although the numerous persons employed in a modern factory may have few contacts within their own group, they are nevertheless indispensable to each other. Minute specialization of occupation has created a situation in which no one individual does or can make the finished article which is the ultimate result of his industry. The co-operation of the whole group is necessary. If the process of manufacture is interrupted at a single point, it can proceed no further. With no goods to sell and, consequently, no money with which to pay wages, the factory will have to close.

The interdependence of many individuals in the production of goods or articles becomes vastly increased and complicated when we consider economic production as a whole. No one produces more than a small fraction of the goods he must have in order to live. Among highly civilized peoples, not even nations are economically independent. Our own country, for example, imports large quantities of coffee, sugar, and rubber, and smaller quantities of a number of items without which we could get along only by drastic changes in our mode of living. Some of the more densely populated countries, such as England and Belgium, whose people are engaged largely in the manufacture of goods to be sold abroad, are dependent upon the exchanges of commerce for the major part of their food supply. They could not support their present populations if their commerce should cease.

## REGIONAL SPECIALIZATION

In connection with commerce, attention may be called to the fact that not all existing economic interdependence is the result of the machine technique of manufacture. It is in part caused by the application of a similar technique to transportation, through which power from coal and oil is utilized to move goods from place to place. The cost and time of transportation being thereby reduced, it has become possible to carry on the various industries in those parts of the nation or the world where the natural advantages are greatest, and to distribute the product of certain industries which, but for cheap transportation, could never have developed beyond the needs of the locality. For instance, the invention of the steam locomotive and the building of railroads made possible the utilization of the rich lands of the Middle West for wheat production, thereby replacing the poorer lands of the East, where the population is concentrated. Prior to the building of the railroad, wheat for use on the Atlantic seaboard could not be grown more than about a hundred miles inland because of the high cost of transportation. The cheaply produced wheat of the West can now be shipped advantageously to almost any of the densely populated areas of the world. Bananas are consumed in large quantity all over the United States, and an extensive industry has been developed in Central America to supply the demand. Since bananas cannot be grown in the United States, the availability of this food at a reasonable price is dependent upon cheap and rapid transportation facilities, such as are supplied by modern steamships and railroads.

## POLITICAL INTERFERENCE WITH REGIONAL SPECIALIZATION

It often happens that a modern nation, unwilling to become dependent upon other nations for its important needs, desires to maintain certain industries within its own boundaries despite natural disadvantages. Usually the argument in favor of such action stresses the danger of a disruption of commerce by war, or the supposed benefits to be derived from the em-



ployment of a country's own citizens in the particular industries involved. The desired end is achieved through a tariff, by means of which the natural advantages of outside competing areas are offset. This is the way, for example, in which the sugar industry is maintained in the United States. By the imposition of a tariff and, more recently, by limitations upon the quantity which may be imported, the price of sugar is held at a level high enough to make its production possible in this country. But for these restrictions upon importation, no sugar would be produced anywhere in the world outside the tropics. During the last several decades, practically all nations have been engaged in raising tariff barriers higher and higher, so that international trade is much less in volume than it would otherwise have been, and much of the advantage which the world as a whole could have gained from regional specialization has been lost. The result can be observed in a general lowering of the world income following these recent increases in trade restrictions.

#### LOSS OF THE SIMPLER ARTS

Because of its great size and the variability of its resources, the United States possibly suffers less from the effects of tariffs than do smaller nations. Regional specialization may and does take place on an extensive scale even within the limits of our own territory. This fact, taken together with the minute division of labor now prevailing, has given rise to a condition in which the average workman produces at most only a few of the numerous items which he utilizes in the process of living. A significant consequence of the change from a local to a national or world economy is the loss of the arts by which the local community made its living a few generations past. Men whose grandfathers could and did produce nearly all the economic goods they used are unable to do much of anything directly for themselves. Cast on Crusoe's island, they would probably starve.

It might be expected that under the conditions of individual helplessness which now obtain, men would be drawn together,

each anxious to ally himself with others the better to insure himself against want. It would seem that a realization of the necessity for friendly co-operation would make every man the friend of all others, wishing or at least willing to share his income with those in need. Nevertheless, social change seems to be going in the opposite direction. With the increase in the necessity for co-operation has come an increasing individualization, a disregard for the welfare of our neighbors which seems in accord with the policy of making every man shift for himself.

### MODERN ECONOMIC PRODUCTION

The machine is responsible for a number of changes in the processes of production which have far-reaching consequences. One of these changes is the greatly increased length of time required for production. While the number of articles per man-hour may be much higher than under a handicraft system, the total time elapsing between the origin of the idea in the inventor's mind and its appearance on the market may be much greater. The division of the process into many smaller processes is in part responsible for the delay. It is only in the exceptional factory that partly finished goods are not found in large quantity awaiting the next step in the process. Sometimes the article must be shipped several times from place to place before it can be completed. Another factor in extending the period required for production is the time consumed in the manufacture of machinery. If the article is different from any already in use, it may be necessary to design and construct new machines before manufacturing can begin.

### LARGE-SCALE PRODUCTION AND STANDARDIZATION

The use of machinery encourages and even necessitates production on a gigantic scale. The cost of the machines needed in the production of an article which must retail for a few cents may amount to many thousands of dollars. It does not pay, therefore, to build machinery for production unless the article can subsequently be made and sold in large quantity.

The need to sell goods in large quantity in order to make a profit has unquestionably been in part responsible for the development of the extensive advertising characteristic of modern selling technique. Through national advertising, it has been possible to create a public taste favorable to certain products and thus to develop a wide market. That the subsequent effect upon the American manner of living has been considerable can scarcely be doubted. The goods available in the shops have been so far standardized and made uniform that local differences in the material aspects of life have almost ceased to exist. House furnishings, clothes, automobiles, motion pictures, newspapers—all are alike from coast to coast and from border to border. The advertising itself, which helps to produce this uniformity, is the same the country over, whether seen on billboards, in street cars, or on the pages of the magazines.

#### CONCENTRATION OF CAPITAL—THE CORPORATION

To carry on the extensive operations demanded by the machine system requires large plants, great supplies of raw material, and the labor of many men before the product can be placed on the merchants' counters. Preliminary costs, which may amount to many millions of dollars, must be paid. The men who make the machines cannot wait months or years for their wages. No more can the men who operate the machines, transforming the raw material by slow degrees into finished goods. The situation calls for financing, the raising of money or credit to meet these expenditures.

Often the amounts are much greater than can be conveniently supplied by one person or by a small group. Here functions the corporation, a form of economic co-operation invented long before the Industrial Revolution, but reaching its greatest development only as an adjunct to the machine. From the legal standpoint, the corporation is a specially created entity, having the right to make certain kinds of contracts, to engage in business, to buy and sell property, to sue and to be sued in the courts, in short, to carry on economic activity in much the

same way as if it were an individual man.<sup>1</sup> Through the corporation the savings of many people can be gathered together to finance an enterprise too big for any one of them. The arrangement for limiting the liability of the corporation minimizes the risk of the participants. The provisions for succession prevent the disruption of the corporation's activities by the death of one or several individuals, as may be the case where a business is operated by a single man or by a partnership. So successful are business enterprises organized on the corporation plan that these organizations are gradually acquiring more and more of the nation's wealth. We have even witnessed the invention of a supercorporation, the holding company, the assets of which consist principally or solely of the stock of other corporations. Such arrangements permit centralized control on a vast scale and may yield economies in operation, but they appear more often to have been used to conceal exorbitant profits and to complicate the facts of ownership so that no one can be held responsible for the actions of the corporation.

Since it is possible under the corporate system for individuals occupying strategic positions in the organization to manipulate the affairs of the corporation to their own advantage, these individuals often profit enormously and thus receive great incomes. The possession of wealth facilitates the acquisition of more wealth. The corporation, itself stimulated by the machine, has thus set in motion the process whereby wealth is becoming concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, as regards both corporations and individuals. The last century has seen unprecedented increases in our national wealth, the bulk of which has been added to accumulations already large.

As has been repeatedly noted, the folkways do not keep pace with the machine age. The institution of private property, for example, originally designed to secure to the individual the peaceful enjoyment of the fruits of his labor, has been extended—in some degree rightly, no doubt—to include

<sup>1</sup> "A corporation is an artificial being, invisible, intangible, and existing only in contemplation of law." *Dartmouth College Case* (17 U.S. 518, 636).

not only land, which is basic to agriculture and the extractive industries, and which provides the locus for all human activities, but also to tools, machines, and factories, so absolutely necessary to production. The latter, since the stretching out of the productive process over months and years, have come to make up the major part of the national wealth. Consumers' goods, once the chief form of wealth, are of relatively small importance. Instead, wealth is now largely in the form of capital. It is not valued for its own sake, since it has no value in consumption, but for the income it can be made to yield either in the form of consumers' goods or of new capital goods. To treat capital as property entirely at the disposition of the owner is satisfactory enough only so long as it is small in quantity, widely distributed, and not of great social importance. To continue the same practice after capital has attained the position of pre-eminence it now holds is to invite social problems of many kinds. It would do no great harm if a man operating a horse-and-cart delivery service should decide to go out of business; for a large railroad company to cease running its trains might result in great suffering for thousands of people. One of the persistent economic problems of our era arises from the attempts of the public to restrict the extension of the rights of private capital and from the resistance to such restriction by the owners.

The position of capital with regard to production gives it unique importance. Without it production under the machine system cannot take place. It is possible, therefore, for those who control capital to drive a sharp bargain with the workers over the question of the distribution of the income from industry. Since many of the owners of capital already have larger incomes than they care to spend for consumers' goods, they save, investing their savings in capital goods, the production of which is stimulated by the demand thus created. There are also, in the aggregate, large savings by persons with relatively small incomes, who are moved by fear of unemployment, illness, and old age to buy life insurance and to start savings accounts. The result is a vast accumulation of savings,

ultimately invested in capital goods, only a part of which can be used to advantage or profit in manufacture. In theory, the overproduction of capital should result in a reduction of its cost, or in its availability at low cost, as reflected in interest rates, and undoubtedly there are some tendencies in this direction, but on account of the great concentration of the control of manufacturing establishments and the possibility of greater profits through curtailment of production, the normal operation of the competitive process is prevented and a due share of the lowered cost in the form of cheaper goods is not passed on to the consumer.

### THE DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME

Critics of the economic system maintain that the effect of monopolistic control is to defeat the processes of *laissez faire* and thus to give rise to an unfair distribution of income. Inequalities of income are probably as old as civilization and are generally accepted as inevitable, if not desirable. Not even the most radical of the equalitarians have contended that all incomes should be exactly the same, although many believe that the distribution now prevailing covers too wide a range, that the difference between the richest and the poorest is too great.<sup>2</sup> There is no agreement, however, as to how far or upon what basis the difference should be reduced. What should determine a man's income? To this question we have no answer.

Production results from the co-operation of those who control the means of production, that is, labor and capital, which is the product of past labor. Usually thousands of individuals, in a number of different economic groups or occupations, are participants in the process. Presumably, each individual adds something of value to the final product. Is each individual entitled to a sum of money equivalent to the value of his contribution? Perhaps general agreement could be reached tentatively in favor of the implied answer; in other words, we

<sup>2</sup> For 1929, "... 0.1 per cent of the families at the top received practically as much as 42 per cent of the families at the bottom of the scale." Leven, Maurice; Moulton, Harold G.; and Warburton, Clark, *America's Capacity to Consume*, p. 55. Washington, D. C.: The Brookings Institution, 1934.

might agree that every man should have what he earns. Yet such agreement could not automatically result in a just distribution of income. It is impossible, with our present techniques, to measure the share of utility contributed by each worker to the final product of a large group. We cannot make this calculation with certainty even for a single factory producing a single kind of article involving few processes. The distribution of reward must necessarily be arbitrary or, at least, based upon some principle other than the actual amount of effort expended or the skill applied or the utility added to the goods. In practice, the relative bargaining power of the various individuals and combinations of individuals is the chief non-fortuitous factor in the determination of the proportions of the value of the product to be received by each.

### THE CLASS SYSTEM

Securing an income is of course basically important; men must eat to live. Moreover, an income is necessary to the satisfaction of other economic needs growing out of the desire for comfort and welfare. Most important of all, however, is the part played by income in the maintenance of status. As has been stated in Chapter I, the attainment or retention of the highest possible status, which may be described as institutionalized social approval, is the aim of every normal person. Whatever contributes to status becomes an intermediate aim. In our society, high status is gained mainly through the possession of wealth and its expenditure in an approved fashion. As a consequence, making money has become the chief objective of human behavior in America. This activity pervades all our noneconomic life as well as the economic, and few individuals escape its influence.

All those who have some degree of success in acquiring wealth are desirous of stabilizing the economic system, at least insofar as it affects their individual interests. Allied with the successful is also a large group of persons who are not yet but who soon expect to be successful, and who desire to assure themselves of the peaceful enjoyment of the future fruits of

their economic endeavors. Together these groups make up a substantial portion of the population. Their ideas as to what kind of society ought to prevail are very powerful, and they serve as determining factors in the shaping of the social order. The result is a more or less stable stratification known as the class system. Those who have failed and are willing to admit it wish for changes which will restore them to economic advantage. A certain amount of selfish co-operation takes place among the members of this group in its conflict with the others, who also selfishly co-operate to defend themselves. The most common technique of the conflict consists in attempting to capture and direct the various social institutions, which in turn control human thought and action. Since the capture of the institutions means almost instant victory to the captors, it follows that the institutions are always in the hands of the conservatives, those who, having brought the institutions round to their side, become quickly successful and thenceforth want no change.

#### EFFECT ON LAW AND GOVERNMENT

The conservative position, as represented by the high-income classes, is subject to constant attack. This is nowhere more evident than in our legal and governmental institutions, probably because these are of such great importance in the determination of economic policy and, through policy, of income. The propertyless, low-income classes attempt by various means to secure for themselves a larger share of the total economic product. The opposition counters by having the means declared illegal and by bringing to bear the force of governmental agencies to suppress them. Sometimes old laws are reinterpreted to cover new cases, as, for example, the extension of the prerogatives of private property to include all sorts of economic advantages, including land, machinery, franchises, good will, and the claim of the rights of persons for the protection of giant corporations. Often new laws are framed to meet any new techniques of fighting which may be evolved by the low-income group, as, for example, recent legislation and legal inter-



pretation directed against the "sit-down" strike. Similar enactments in the past have followed the appearance of the labor union, the now ordinary "walk-out" strike, and picketing.

In a democracy, one consequence of the class conflict is the rise of political parties representing the main points of view. Sometimes these are distinguished merely by the fact that one party is conservative while the other is radical, the former including many persons who prefer security for the little they have, or expect to get, to the uncertainty of the latter. The radical programs usually lack specificity, being often nothing more than a series of attacks upon the *status quo* without the presentation of a definite substitute plan of action. The conservatives, favoring the established order, need no program other than the advocacy of that order.

Sometimes the basic conflict has been sharpened by the entrance of labor parties and farmers' parties, avowedly fighting for the economic interests of the groups involved. The candidates placed in the field by these parties run on platforms replete with proposed changes of the taxation system, of foreign policy, of tariff policy, and other phases of governmental activity—changes which are expected to bring economic benefits to their proponents. Often even the pretense of concern for the general welfare, which usually appears in the conservative platforms, is lacking.

Victory for the radical groups comes occasionally, but is short-lived. Once in power, the leaders tend to become conservative. They find the responsibilities of running a government of conflicting interests a little heavier than they had anticipated, and are soon among those working for stability instead of the rights of the individual. At the next election they fail to command sufficient support from their followers to remain in office. Some permanent effects upon governmental institutions have, however, resulted from the efforts of particular groups, good examples being found in some of the departments of the Federal government. The Departments of Agriculture, of Commerce, and of Labor thus represent in the administration the respective interests of certain fairly well-

defined economic groups in the United States. Each group is enabled, through its department, to exert influence upon the administrative and legislative acts of the government as a whole. Lack of consistency and vigor in national policy may sometimes be traced to the conflicts and compromises occurring among the representatives of various interests in the tortuous process through which policy is formulated.

#### BUSINESS

The varied activities through which money-making is carried on are known, particularly if extensive or profitable, as business. The term includes a number of occupations, most of them related in some way to buying and selling. Business is therefore almost identical with the British "trade." It no longer carries the implication of inferiority which it had in England two or three generations ago, a fact which indicates the effects of the machine upon our culture. Business is now highly honorific. Those engaged in it are looked upon as constituting a sort of aristocracy, having not only money but also intelligence and wisdom. It is generally taken for granted that when public questions are under discussion the advice of the business men will be sought. The pronouncements of business men often have more influence, even in matters about which they are likely to be uninformed, than the statements of scientists, professional men, or wage earners.

There is now in evidence a tendency for business to acquire, apparently deliberately, something of the peculiar confidence which the public has bestowed only upon the professions, especially law and medicine. The initiation of such a movement can be explained only by taking into account the overwhelming prestige of business in modern society. The movement can scarcely succeed, for it should be obvious that an irreconcilable difference in objective separates business from the professions. Money-making is and must remain the primary purpose of the former. This does not mean that business renders no useful service. The rule that "he profits most who serves best" may lead many a business man to deal fairly and

even generously with his customers. The attorney or the physician, however, must remain faithful to the interests of his client or patient without concern for the fee. To be sure, business methods have intruded into the consulting room, thereby giving rise to one of the more generally recognized social problems of the day, and providing still further evidence of the power of business and its ideals.

From much of the current writing on socio-economic matters, it appears to be assumed that general social welfare and the welfare of business are synonymous. It may be admitted that a relationship exists. Business men make up a considerable proportion of the population. The welfare of business, however, is almost always measured in terms of profits, and profitable business may be achieved through shrewd salesmanship, advertising, or monopolistic advantage. Profit secured by such methods is of doubtful social value. The question may well be raised as to whether a profit is possible anywhere without a corresponding loss somewhere else. Profitable business may exist at the same time that large sections of the population are receiving incomes too low to support life at any acceptable standard. It may even be true that under such circumstances much of the profit is made at the expense of low-income groups, and that it reflects a condition quite the opposite of social welfare. But so firmly entrenched in the public mind is the idea that profitable business means general prosperity that we are not likely soon to change.

#### RELIGION

Another phase of institutionalized behavior deeply affected by economic considerations is organized religion.<sup>8</sup> Churches, like all other institutions in an economic society, require for their support funds, which must necessarily come from those who have money and are willing to make contributions. The church is obliged by the necessities of the case to address itself to people who are at least moderately well to do. The poor cannot afford to spend money for religion or for any other

<sup>8</sup> See Veblen, Thorstein, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 1899, Chapter 12.

purpose not immediately demanded by the necessities of existence. They are therefore regarded by the church merely as objects of charity.

In serving the religious interests of the church-supporting public, the church has been forced to adapt itself to the class distinctions which exist in modern society, even though this adaptation is contrary to the equalitarian views held by practically every denomination. In small communities, the several denominations often cater respectively to the several social levels of the inhabitants. In communities large enough to support a number of churches of the same denomination, it often happens that one church is attended predominantly by middle-class people, while another is attended largely by the ultra-wealthy. The standard of living of the members of the congregation is necessarily reflected in the church building and its furnishings. Like their homes, their churches must be as fine as possible and the furnishings must be the costliest that can be afforded. If it were otherwise, churchgoers would not feel at home. If the service is held in a cheaply constructed room, fitted with cheap benches, they are likely to be repelled and to seek more attractive surroundings in which to worship. The more accustomed a given member is to luxurious surroundings at home the more definitely he will demand similar surroundings in church. The congregation which undertakes to economize on its equipment will soon find itself unable to support itself even on a modest scale.

More important, of course, is the influence of the ideals of modern economic class society upon the teachings of the church. As a guardian of the moral order, the church necessarily concerns itself with human relations of every kind. In theory, it is the defender of the weak and the oppressed. The preacher who sincerely desires to maintain the theoretical position of the church finds himself facing a dilemma. If he speaks too plainly in favor of the weak and the oppressed, he may lose many of his parishioners and thenceforth have no pulpit from which to speak. Some of the well to do whom he addresses may go somewhere else to worship, and those re-

maining may be unable to keep up the church even if they so desired. If, on the other hand, the preacher spares the feelings of his parishioners, the church may lose much of its value as a power for social progress. The church may subsequently resort to formalism, through which its admonishments to a better life may become so remote and impersonal that not even the worst sinner in the congregation is made in the least uncomfortable.

The resulting situation for the considerable portion of the population which desires to avail itself of the emotional and stabilizing values of religion is difficult. The barren formalism of some denominations may repel the worshiper; besides, the other members of the congregation may look askance at his unfashionable attire and his meager contribution. His only recourse is to start a new church. The consequence is that the history of religion in America is full of accounts of new sects, nearly all begun among the lower classes. The individual histories of these many sects are monotonously similar. If a sect is successful, its character changes so that it appeals to a social class higher than that of its originators. The service gradually loses its emotional and informal character and becomes fixed in pattern. More often than not, however, the sect fails, giving way to new ones, which in turn undertake to serve the masses who want religion but cannot afford to pay for it.

#### EDUCATION

Americans are practically unanimous in their belief that education confers great benefits upon its recipients and indirectly upon society at large. Probably this belief originates in the fact that education was once an upper-class prerogative, a mark of the gentleman. With the establishment of political democracy, it was readily concluded that everyone is entitled to the privileges of the upper classes. The belief is rationalized by the argument that only educated people can properly discharge the duties of citizenship and thereby preserve the political democracy set up by the founders. This idea is repeated

so often that it is accepted generally as a truism. Actually the idea is correct only if the education considered is appropriate to the use demanded of it. All kinds of learning are included in the term education. Each kind may be valuable under particular circumstances, but unless citizenship is defined so broadly as to include every legitimate function of a member of society, there must remain certain kinds of education which at best are of value only to the individual and at worst are harmful to society.

Naturally, not all possible subjects can be included in a general curriculum. There must be evaluation and selection. The test for acceptance or rejection of a subject is presumably its social value. It is at this point that the strains and stresses of our social order are transferred to the educational system. Educators do not agree upon the answer to the question of what shall be taught in the schools. The three R's and, possibly, the natural sciences, may receive an almost unanimous endorsement, but all else is accepted only with qualifications. Literature and the social sciences, that is, knowledge of society, inevitably embody a point of view or a bias in favor of some form of society or some section of society as against another. Thus there is American history from the Southern viewpoint as against the Northern, from the capitalistic position as against the proletarian. There is a political science of the *status quo*; another of change and reform. Even geography may be prejudiced.

The educational system as a whole reflects the beliefs of the dominant groups in our society. The curriculum still retains traces of the classics, indicating a lingering though fast-fading faith in the "gentleman" as a worthy social ideal. Emphasis upon the professions shows the influence of the bourgeois elements; disregard of the trades indicates the relatively slight influence of the lower economic groups. All groups have united under the influence of present-day American culture to evaluate education in terms of money. Young people are urged on every hand to secure an education because it will increase their incomes. Statistics are freely printed and quoted

to demonstrate the greater earning power of college graduates as compared with those of the high school. Circumstances conspire to interest students primarily in vocational training, measuring the value of that training on the basis of larger potential incomes for themselves rather than on increased power of service to the community.

Unwilling to admit officially the existence of class differences in the population, democratic society undertakes to educate everyone for life in the upper class. The result is that the children of the working classes derive less benefit from school attendance than they would if education were modified to meet their special needs. Herein is another dilemma. Quite likely the present system is, in this respect, desirable from the viewpoint of democracy, since any recognition of class distinctions, even though of advantage to individuals, would serve to magnify those distinctions and intensify class conflicts.

#### COMMUNICATION

The application of the machine to communication has made possible the rapid gathering of news from all parts of the world and getting it into print in millions of newspapers within a few hours or minutes after the original event has taken place. The efficiency of the machine and the extensiveness of the operations have combined to reduce the cost of printing to a small fraction of what it was in the days of the hand press. Yet, for all this, it is reasonably certain that the newspaper could not have reached its present state of development without advertising. This practice is an outgrowth of the discovery that goods can be sold by means of descriptions and praises of their merits read by potential customers. To secure the distribution of advertising materials, merchants are willing to pay handsomely; publishers have seen in this fact a golden opportunity, and the modern American newspaper is the result.

The newspaper plays a rôle of highest importance in the life of the city. Through it the urban dweller keeps oriented in the complex movement of his community; without it he would become bewildered and lost. The city could scarcely maintain

itself as an integrated social community without the newspaper. Yet this function of the newspaper is incidental to the objectives of the publisher. For him the newspaper is a commercial venture, undertaken for profit and so managed as to yield the highest possible returns. Usually this end is best reached by the sale of advertising. Subscribers are wanted not primarily because of the money they contribute; often they pay little more for the paper than the cost of distribution. They are wanted, because the price that may be charged for advertising is dependent upon the size of the circulation. Every conceivable device is used to attract readers. Pictures, two-inch type in the headlines, and blazing colors catch the most indifferent eye. Attractively written news stories, selected for their dramatic or entertaining qualities, hold the reader's interest. Fiction, continued in the next issue, makes him a regular buyer of the paper.

The newspaper is no longer, like its early prototypes, a mere conveyer of information and exponent of the editor's views. Events lacking in attractive qualities, even though important, are briefly presented in inside columns. Often the front page is filled with reports of unusual crimes, oddities, and the personal affairs of famous people. The paper throbs with human interest. It has become amusing and entertaining, and has taken over in large degree the rôle of romantic fiction formerly played by the dime novel. It may be maintained that in its attempt to function in this way the newspaper no longer gives its readers a true picture of the world, and the charge could probably be substantiated. But a more serious charge can be made, namely, that the newspaper is not free to tell the truth in some matters even if it so wished. Advertisers must be pleased, otherwise they may withdraw their accounts. Consequently, the editor can take no position which is antagonistic to the interests of the large advertisers, no matter how objectionable those interests may be from the general point of view. Even news must be "properly" presented.



## RADIO

A challenge to the power of the press is presented by the radio, but the challenge is merely a threat to divert the income of advertising from the publishers to the broadcasters. From its beginning, less than twenty years ago, broadcasting has grown to be a small industry, employing a hundred thousand persons. Twenty and a half million homes have radio receivers, and well over half the people of the United States are habitual listeners.<sup>4</sup> The programs they hear are for the most part paid for by advertisers who expect, through the attraction of listeners, to "plug" their products and increase their sales. The same power which controls the editorial policy of the newspaper also controls the expression of fact and opinion over the air. Here, as everywhere else, he who pays the fiddler calls the tune.<sup>5</sup>

As a factor in the cultural unification of the nation and of the world, the power of the radio can scarcely be appreciated. Already practically every person in America has heard music and voices from dozens of cities in as many different countries. The ringing of "Big Ben" and the whistle of the *Queen Mary* have been carried to the ends of the earth. News events of importance are broadcast while in progress, so that as a whole nation of people we are constantly in almost perfect temporal orientation with the moving world. This results in a great increase in the rapidity of social change, for it must be recalled that the chief hindrances to social change are isolation or faulty communication. An election at present is scarcely over before its outcome is known everywhere. A scientific discovery, an invention, an idea—all travel with the speed of light. Instantly, people can and must react to the new factor in the situation. It requires no extraordinary foresight to predict that cultural similarities will be an important by-product of the radio in the years to come.

<sup>4</sup> Cantril, Hadley, and Allport, Gordon W., *The Psychology of Radio*, 1935, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Frost, S. E., Jr., *Is American Radio Democratic?*, 1937, pp. 88-107.

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

In addition to the direct effects upon institutions that have been indicated, the machine has indirectly affected practically all the rest. This has come about in part as a result of the redistribution of the population which has occurred as an adjustment to the machine. Before the appearance of modern manufacturing, cities, as a rule, were small and unimportant. Commerce, government, and perhaps defense, none very extensive, were the sole functions of the city. People moved rarely, living instead from birth to death in the communities of their forefathers. The use of power brought people near the source of the power to work in the factory. So also did the division of labor in the processes of manufacture. The appearance of large quantities of goods and the improvement in transportation increased the number of commercial transactions. Increased contacts necessitated more governmental activity. All these changes have tended to attract people to the city from the country. In a hundred years the population of the Western world has been transformed from one almost entirely rural to one predominantly urban, from an easy-going handicraft system to high-speed industrialism. As a consequence, the stability of the old order, from the family to the state, has been broken up. The controls which were effective in the small, settled farm community no longer suffice in the mobile, anonymous community of the city. To this fact may be traced many of the conditions we speak of as social problems—family disorganization, unemployment, crime, and personal maladjustments of various sorts.

To know this, however, gives but little help in our search for a solution of the problems. A return to the simpler life of the past is impossible. So many good things have come from the machine and so dependent upon its services have we become that we can scarcely even contemplate its absence. We must accept it and adjust to it as best we can.

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## THE CHANGING FAMILY

UNQUESTIONABLY, the most important social group is the family. Sociologists have pointed out its supreme rôle as the source of altruism, as the mold of personality, as the guardian of all that is most precious in our social heritage. The prototype of other social groupings, it has affected the form of society to a degree scarcely realized. State and church alike are but extensions of the family; in the nature of their organization, in the relations of their members, and in the symbolism used in their communications the influence of the family is evident.

The extraordinary significance of the family is a natural result of its priority, as regards both the individual and the race. Although the individual is considered a member of a class, a community, a church, and other groups as soon as he is born, he does not, as a matter of fact, function actively in these groups for many years after his birth. His first acquaintances are the members of his own family; from them he acquires his ways of acting and thinking during the most impressionable years of his life. The habits thus learned become the basis of all his subsequent behavior.

### ORIGIN AND AGE OF THE FAMILY

In comparison with other social groups, the family can lay claim to respectable antiquity, if, indeed, it is not clearly the oldest of them all. Biological necessity requires the close association of mother and child for many years after the birth of the latter, an association which must have yielded attachments akin to love even in the most primitive social life of early man. The place of the father is not so easily inferred, though it is probable that here, too, biological needs served as

the selective agency which encouraged permanent union between the father and the mother and their children. Certainly a family with a father to serve as protector had a better chance to survive in a hostile environment than one in which the mother alone had to feed and defend her brood.

With respect to the origin of the authority and leadership of the father in the family, there has been much conjecturing. The important rôle of the mother would seem to have given her the highest position, and some writers<sup>1</sup> maintain that the earliest forms of the family were in fact matriarchal in character. The accession of the father is considered a usurpation made through the exercise of his superior physical strength. According to this view the patriarchal family is a comparatively late development, coming into existence only after the institution of private property had been firmly established.

An examination of the family among primitive peoples, however, reveals uniformity only within wide limits. By defining the family as "a more or less durable connection between male and female,"<sup>2</sup> the term is made to include groups having little similarity. Thus the number of persons in the group may vary from two to a hundred or even more, and the durability of the connection may range from absolute permanence to transient relationships lasting but a short season. The conditions under which family unions are terminated during the lifetime of the parties, the equivalent of modern divorce, also differ greatly among primitive peoples. In some instances no divorces are permitted; in others the marriage bond may be dissolved at will by either party. In other cases husbands alone have the right to divorce; in still others divorce is the sole prerogative of the wife.<sup>3</sup>

Among peoples who have entered the stage of barbarism in their culture, the husband appears to have gained in power over the family at the expense of the wife. Under these conditions, women are usually regarded as property to be bought

<sup>1</sup> See Bachofen, J. J., *Das Mutterrecht*, 1861.

<sup>2</sup> Westermarck, Eduard, *The History of Human Marriage*, 1921, Vol. I, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of differences in divorce among primitive peoples, see Howard, George E., *History of Matrimonial Institutions*, 1904, Vol. I, pp. 225 ff.

and sold with but little regard for their wishes or their welfare. The entrance into the mores of the notion that wives and children are the property of the husband and father marks the beginning of a period of great stability in family life. Obviously, the acceptance of the status of women as property by the whole population, women, of course, included, allows little opportunity for the appearance of family disorganization. A person wholly subject to the control of another cannot oppose, without breach of law and morals, the exercise of that control, even though it be unreasonable. If a wife thought of divorce, her husband could simply forbid her seeking it and thus bring an end to her revolt. A disobedient wife could not hope for the slightest sympathy.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of rather numerous exceptions, it may be said that the family in which the man owns his wife and children is characteristic of barbarism and early civilization.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, this arrangement has been so persistent that many of its features are still conspicuous in modern society. Inasmuch as control is the essence of the property relationship and the husband in most societies still has a good deal of control over his wife, she occupies to a limited degree, at least, the status of property, that is, the status of human property or of the slave.

A great change, however, has taken place in the family. It is not possible to describe all the influences which have combined to bring the institution to its present state, but some of the more conspicuous causes may be noted. Among these are the doctrines promulgated by the Christian church. The assumption that all human beings are the children of God, equal before Him, quite naturally suggests as a corollary the equality of human beings on earth. That this belief reacted to the advantage of women is hardly disputable. And it did so in spite of the doctrines that women are temptresses to sin and that celibacy is a virtue.

Revolutionized economic conditions have probably had even

<sup>4</sup> See Spencer, Anna G., *Woman's Share in Social Culture*, 1913, p. 253.

<sup>5</sup> Miller, Nathan, "The European Heritage of the American Family," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March, 1932, Vol. CLX, pp. 1-6.

more to do with the changes in the family than has religion. The specialization of occupations first took men out of their homes. Women, thereby left in charge of domestic establishments, often of considerable magnitude, acquired training in leadership and positions of authority. Successful demonstration of ability gave them confidence in themselves; the habit of commanding made them self-assertive.

#### APPEARANCE OF THE LADY

It is not unreasonable to suppose that circumstances like these gave rise to the lady, the first type of emancipated woman. At any rate, she appeared in the large households of early, war-like societies in which, naturally, the men were often absent from home on military expeditions. Here, as chief of a large number of servants, the wife ruled in the absence of her lord. In the course of so doing she acquired certain rights and prerogatives which even the husband was obliged to respect. An education of a sort and freedom from toil came to be enjoyed by the lady as her just due. Yet her position was decidedly limited in its possibilities; she could never hope to become more than a temporary lieutenant. Between the periods in which she exercised this delegated authority she had nothing to do, and, with the disappearance of economically productive activity in the home, she has become permanently unemployed. She still remains as a middle- and upper-class ideal, appearing in reality and living a life of idle futility whenever the husband's resources permit.

Although at present the lady appears to be little more than a useless parasite, her predecessors in the past contributed largely toward those ideas which have led to the comparative freedom of women. As an inspiration to troubadours and as the object of chivalrous attention, she helped to raise women to the status of beings worthy of man's literary efforts and of his elaborate courtesy. More than this, the lady proved that women can manage and rule and acquire learning, often quite as successfully as men.

## WOMAN BECOMES WAGE EARNER

Possibly the most important influence in raising the standing of woman has been the development of women's economic activities outside the home. The sense of independence gained by the woman who has a job of her own and gets paid for it places her in a position to demand the ballot and more equitable divorce laws. The escape from the economic control of the husband makes the social controls, though sanctioned by custom, religion, and law, easy enough to break down. Once started, certain conditions within the family itself contribute to further change in the institution. The removal of industry from the home to the factory destroys the home as a school in which children may be trained for their life work. The protracted absence of the parents greatly reduces their efficiency as moral teachers of their children. The state, rightly concerned over the welfare of its future citizens, sets up schools to educate them. The presence of such schools frees more parents for industry and thereby further decreases the responsibilities of the home and the attachments of the members for each other.

## DECAY OF CUSTOM

Custom, the tyrant of settled society, has lost its power to maintain the established order. Individuals recognize the duty of following custom only in the presence of acquaintances who also recognize the duty of following custom. When, in consequence of the excessive mobility of modern society, people rarely learn to know the other people in their vicinity, they cease to be influenced by what the neighbors say.

The result is that personal and individual interests formerly suppressed by the moral order for the benefit of the family now express themselves freely. If children do not wish to obey their parents, no community solidly backs up the father in his efforts to compel obedience. If a wife prefers a career to housework, the objecting husband receives scant sympathy from an anonymous public. The old-time family with its



rigid, static relationship has almost completely given way to voluntary partnerships to be begun whenever personal inclinations prompt individuals thereto, to be terminated whenever personal interests are jeopardized by the continuance of the relationship. Even children assume the right to break off family ties as soon as they can make their own living.

#### PERSISTENCE OF THE IDEAL FAMILY

In spite of this state of affairs, we still retain the ideal of a mildly patriarchal family. We like to think of the father as the head of the house, a benevolent despot, whose just and reasonable commands are scarcely ever uttered, so accurately and eagerly are they anticipated by the wife and children. The ideal home is found in the single-family residence, situated in the middle of an ample lot, facing a wide, shaded street.

The threatened disappearance of this form of family life gives cause for a certain amount of concern for the future. We are afraid that without this kind of family as a matrix, boys and girls cannot be given those traits of personality and character which will enable them to maintain a society capable of giving happiness to its members. It is for this reason that we regard the changes hereinafter described as social problems. It is for this reason also that we attempt to prevent or direct these changes so as to restore in fact the ideal existing in our minds.

#### THE FAMILY AND THE RECENT PAST

Those who exhibit concern for the fate of the family frequently compare the modern family with that of about two generations ago. By such comparison the recent changes, most of which are regarded as undesirable, are brought into bold relief. The procedure serves its purpose well. It seems desirable, therefore, at this point, to introduce a brief, generalized description of the American family as it existed before the changes referred to had conspicuously affected its character. This is the family as found in the United States about seventy-five years ago, though it must be recognized that wide differ-

ences in the family from class to class or from city to country were even then in existence.

#### STABILITY AND CONTINUITY

Each family of that day possessed a stability which made it a fixed feature of the community. In the areas which had passed the pioneering stage, families were established in homesteads, which they occupied generation after generation. The homestead and its family were identified in the minds of the members of the community, and a considerable fund of knowledge concerning the family and numerous attitudes toward it were part of community culture. Families had reputations, good or bad. These reputations attached to individual members of the families, more or less regardless of the extent to which they were merited.

The development and persistence of family reputations depended upon the continuity of the family group in the community, a continuity which was maintained not only by the fixed residence, but also by the large size of the family group. In addition to numerous children, the family often included grandparents or grandchildren, husbands or wives of adult children, and relatives of varying degrees of kinship. Although the time had long since passed when the law commanded every person to remain in or become attached to a family, this group provided the only practical means of securing food, lodging, and a social life for the average individual. This was particularly true of unmarried women. Such women could hardly be considered respectable if they did not make their homes with family groups. The requirements of the mores, therefore, in addition to the high birth rate, tended to produce large families. Death rates were also high, to be sure, so that the turnover of membership in the family was considerable, but deaths which resulted in orphaned children or widowed wives did not result in fragments of families, each attempting to carry on an independent life. Orphans and widows joined the families of relatives.

It is obvious that under these conditions the family, rather

than the individual, functioned as the social unit. Since the average individual life was short, the average person had insufficient time to establish himself as an entity in the community; whereas the family, having a long life, became the unit around which attitudes developed. That there were cases of broken families and of individuals who lived long did not affect the general result. Society was geared to a condition in which families counted a great deal and individuals very little. That there were exceptions did not matter.

#### INTERNAL ORGANIZATION—PARENTAL AUTHORITY

Another important feature of the family here described, which, incidentally, contributed greatly to its stability, was the power of control residing in the parents, more particularly in the father. Though his dominance had been greatly weakened in comparison with that of his Colonial predecessors, the father still ruled with an iron hand. All members of the family, including the wife, were expected to obey him without question. His control over the family finances was absolute. His was the power to claim all the earnings of his wife and minor children. No contracts or agreements could be entered into by the wife without the consent of the husband. He alone had the legal right to decide where and how the family should live.

In the exercise of his powers of control, the husband and father had the full support of the community, as expressed in law and in the mores. The command "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother" was one of the most important in the decalogue. The individual who rebelled against the strictness of the regime became something of an outcast. He was regarded as ungrateful to the other members of his family, who were looked upon as having made sacrifices for his welfare. The family itself felt ashamed of those members who deserted it, and was often quite as severe in condemnation of the fault as was the community at large.

## POSITION OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE FAMILY

In the past, as in the present, the desire for status furnished the chief incentive in determining the social behavior of the individual. However, as long as the family retained the central position in the life of the community, the individual was submerged. His status was hardly his own; it was the reflection of the status of his family. Individual achievement counted, to be sure, since the status of the family was the result of community evaluation of the total achievements of its members, but there was no easy way in which the individual, by breaking his family ties, could acquire status by his own efforts. Known only as a member of his family, the individual was forced to accept the status of this group.

As a consequence, the reward of high status for himself was not presented to the individual as an incentive to activity. What he did made relatively little difference in the esteem in which he was held by his fellow men. Within the family, however, it was quite otherwise. In the realization that what the individual member did affected the status of all the others, the family exerted strong pressure upon its members to "make good" according to community standards. The penalty for bringing shame and disgrace upon the family group, in extreme instances, was expulsion, a penalty few dared risk in a world where life could be lived only by membership in the family.

## ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY—PRODUCTION

It must be recalled that the family now under consideration was more than a status-yielding social entity. It was also the basic economic organization within which individuals secured satisfactions of their economic needs and wants. Such basic necessities as food, clothing, and shelter were ordinarily made into final, usable form through industry engaged in by the members of the family for themselves alone. These goods were not freely available in the market. Hotels, restaurants, and laundries were rare. Both the demand and the supply

were low. Jobs were available generally only to persons who, as members of a family, shared in the productive activities of this group. This is not to say that the family was economically independent;<sup>6</sup> it secured partly manufactured materials from the community at large. The individual, however, was definitely dependent upon the family.

#### OCCUPATIONS AND DIVISION OF LABOR

The family as a production unit was suited to a state of technological development which had not proceeded far beyond the handicraft stage. Some specialization of occupation was possible; in the case of exceptionally large families it went so far as to yield rather definite trades within the family itself. For the most part, however, the division of labor went no further than to specify men's work and women's work. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the family had already lost much of its control over production through development of occupational activities outside the home.<sup>7</sup>

#### CONSUMPTION

So far as distribution of the products of its industry was concerned, the family was communistic. Members shared according to their need rather than according to the extent of their contribution. The homestead, the household equipment and furnishings, and the food supply were looked upon as common property belonging to the whole family. Guests profited by this attitude, since, as temporary members of the family, they were accorded the right to partake freely of the family's economic goods. Attempts were made by some families following the American Revolution to carry this idea so far as to prevent the partition of family estates, by setting up a system of primogeniture. Individualism, however, had already gained too strong a position to permit the success of this plan.

<sup>6</sup> Kyrk, Hazel, *Economic Problems of the Family*, 1933, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> The extent to which economic production is carried on outside the home is well indicated by Census figures on urbanization. For the United States the percentage of the population living in cities over 2,500 in 1880 was 28.6; by 1930 the percentage had reached 56.2.

## RELIGION AND RECREATION IN THE FAMILY

The fact that community life was organized around the family was responsible for allotting to it several functions which, in an individualistic society, would be more readily accomplished through specialized institutions. Conspicuous among these functions are religion and recreation. In a time still earlier than that of which we are treating, the family was the center of all religious activity. It will be recalled that each Roman family had its own particular "household" gods, in the service of whom the father was the high priest. The symbolism of religion even today retains numerous references to familial relationships existing between God and man. Seventy-five years ago, in America, religion had in the main moved from the home to the church, but family worship and prayers were still common and it was expected that religious principles would be inculcated in the children by the parents.

Family recreational activities appear to have been the result of necessity. Specialized forms of recreation, segregated for age and sex groupings, were not a part of community culture. If people wished to play, they had to do it at home with their relatives.<sup>8</sup> It is probable also that family recreation was facilitated by the absence of great personal differences in the tastes and interests of the members. The society of the day was comparatively stable and immobile. Social contacts were limited in scope and variety. Under these conditions, personalities with great differences were unlikely to appear.

## PURITANISM AND PRUDERY

Although obviously serving as means of satisfying sexual impulses, this function of the family of seventy-five years ago was seldom mentioned. Discussion of sex in any of its manifestations was possible only through the use of the most round-about euphemisms. The word "sex" itself, along with "male" and "female" and the names of male domestic animals, could

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Whittier's "Snow-Bound."

not be mentioned when ladies were present. Legs were "limbs."<sup>9</sup> Everything connected with sex was taboo, and the whole subject was variously regarded as sinful, degrading, or disgusting. Boys and men usually learned something about the physical aspect of sex from the barnyard; girls and women often remained ignorant even of that. Indeed, a woman could scarcely admit she ever heard of sex, for to possess such knowledge was considered unladylike, if not positive evidence of wantonness. Both men and women remained ignorant of the psychological aspects of sex. They approached marriage with the attitude that it was a mysterious evil, about which the less said the better. More than likely, the personal experience of partners in marriage finally resulted in satisfactory adjustments in some instances, but in many cases maladjustments due to ignorance remained through the duration of the marriage as a handicap to its complete success. It is quite probable that many divorces would have occurred had the mores of the period not so firmly held partners in marriage to the keeping of their vows no matter how nearly intolerable.

#### FACTORS AFFECTING THE FAMILY

During the period between the middle of the last century and the present, a number of factors have operated to change the family institution. Basically, perhaps, the majority of these factors are economic in their derivation, a by-product of the change in economic organization resulting from the machine technique of manufacture and cheap, mechanized transportation. Practically all the factors involved have resulted in a diminution—or, at least, an apparent diminution—of the importance of the family in our society. Since the family is still held to be a worthy institution, which ought to be supported and maintained, both the changes and the factors responsible for them are looked upon as bad. It is this attitude toward changes in the family which causes us to treat them as a social problem.

<sup>9</sup> See Folsom, Joseph K., *The Family*, 1934, p. 152.

## INDIVIDUALISM AND DEMOCRACY

Notable among the social developments of recent times is the emergence of the individual as the social unit. This implies the acceptance of the idea of "personal rights." The development of individual capacities according to the individual's own judgment is encouraged; he must "live his own life," unhampered by group attachments. In order that he may do this, society must provide equality of opportunity. Every man must have an equal voice in the government in order that it may truly represent the people, whose individual prerogatives must be preserved. To the efforts of each man to win an economic competency the government must erect no barriers. Freedom of contract must be maintained even if some men suffer because they are poor bargainers. The doctrines of *caveat emptor* and of *laissez faire* must be followed in practice lest in protecting some individuals the right of others to sell and trade freely be obstructed.

## FEMINISM AND EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN

Individuality, insofar as granted by society, formerly inhered only in male persons.<sup>10</sup> Women were something less than full-fledged persons, properly to be classified with children and incompetents. At present, as the result of the feministic movement in its various manifestations, this condition no longer obtains. Though the process of raising women from their lowly status had begun before the Industrial Revolution, it was this event which set in motion the forces which at last have practically completed their emancipation. The machine took women out of their homes and, though for many years husbands continued to collect wages earned by their wives, the fact that women worked outside the home, unsupervised by members of their families, tended to increase their independence and self-reliance. As a consequence, they boldly asked for equal rights, political, economic, and social. They have demanded the right to vote, to hold office, and to share equally

<sup>10</sup> Groves, Ernest R., *The Drifting Home*, 1926, p. 19.



with their husbands in the legal parental rights to their children. They have demanded respect as individual persons. Clearly, all this has affected the family. With the feminization movement practically completed and the goal of sex equality almost reached, the family has come to have two heads instead of one.

#### DIVISION OF LABOR

The machine and large-scale production have gradually destroyed handicrafts and taken the workers, men and women alike, out of the home and placed them in the factory. In the course of this process the home has gradually lost its function as the setting for the family as a production unit. The need of family connections to secure a job has disappeared. Children in urban occupations rarely work for or with their parents. On the contrary, in many kinds of employment, family connections may prove a hindrance rather than a help. Under the influence of such a condition, the sense of dependence upon a family vanishes with the fact, and the family sinks in social estimation of its value.

#### IMPROVED STATUS OF CHILDREN

In the beginning, machines threatened to take from the home not only the parents, but also the children. Exploitation of working-class children was the rule during early days of the Industrial Revolution. Persistent efforts to reduce child labor, which came to be regarded as a serious social problem in itself, ultimately proved effective. Child labor, though still a potential threat to childhood, has been greatly reduced in the United States. As a part of the same general movement on behalf of child welfare, the status of children has much improved. No longer do we hear the old adage that children should be seen and not heard. No longer are they fed with what is left after the adults have eaten. There are fewer of them than formerly, but the added attention they receive has greatly increased their chances for survival. From the viewpoint of the physical welfare of the young child, there can scarcely be any

doubt that the family of the present is vastly superior to that of 1860.

### EDUCATION

As education has become highly technical and specialized, it has necessarily been forced out of the home and into the care of outside agencies. Here, as everywhere, the influence of the individualistic ideal is evident. Regimentation, while the natural tendency in the interests of economy, is opposed by all educators. In its stead, they advocate giving attention to the individual to enable him to develop to the best advantage whatever abilities he may have. We have come to accept it as natural, therefore, that sons should not enter the occupations of their fathers. We now look with sympathy upon daughters who attempt careers.<sup>11</sup> The rôle of the family is simple; it is merely expected not to interfere with the children in their efforts to find places for themselves in the world.

### THE ROMANTIC COMPLEX

The policy of noninterference has extended even to the domain of marriage itself, a fact readily understandable in view of the development of individualism. As long as every member of the family remained a member for life, any attachments which he might form were of major concern to the family. A marriage brought a new member into the family; it united two groups instead of merely two individuals. With the emancipation of the individual from the family, it is natural that the group should cease attempting to control his personal affairs.

On the individual's side, there is the glorification of romance through an elaborate ceremonial of self-deception. The ideals of the puritan and Victorian past have encouraged the romantic point of view, which involves the magnification of personal affection and the deliberate shutting out of all other considerations, such as health, intelligence, social status, economic competence, and, especially, sexual compatibility. The young man

<sup>11</sup> Calhoun, Arthur Wallace, "The Early American Family," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March, 1932, Vol. CLX, pp. 7-12.

who finds himself thinking of such matters is apt to suspect that he is contemplating marriage from a base and materialistic position. If he catches himself evaluating a young woman in these terms, he knows he does not love her. For love rises above material things.

The failure of the young man to take account of those characteristics which tend to make for a congenial married life places a heavy burden upon the attachments of love. Limited by all-powerful mores to a single attachment at a time, he must find in the object of his affection gratification for all his desires for response. A man's wife must be his friend and companion, his counselor and helper, as well as the object of his love and his erotic impulses. Moreover, she must be a good householder and manager, entertainer and conversationalist. That the ordinary man does not always find all these qualities in one ordinary woman is not particularly strange, especially since he rarely takes pains to look for them before marriage. To maintain the illusion of romantic perfection in his wife is to accomplish a *tour de force* of the intellect and emotion of which few men are capable. A wife who has married a "hero" faces the same problem. The method usually followed is to reaffirm repeatedly that each loves the other more than all the world. The fact of affection can never be taken for granted. Unfortunately the very insistence upon its intensity testifies to its inadequacy and presages ultimate disillusionment, disappointment, and, perhaps, separation. Not even the close affectional relationship engendered by the child-centered family can counteract the centrifugal forces when no account is taken of them.

Fortunately, a growing number of American young people are beginning to take a more common-sense view of marriage. In answers to questionnaires regarding the qualities which they prefer in future spouses, we find them naming such substantial traits as character, health, housekeeping ability, education, and disposition.<sup>12</sup> College courses intended to offer assistance in preparation for matrimony are becoming increasingly popular with students. Under the impact of such courses and of an

<sup>12</sup> Popenoe, Paul, *Modern Marriage*, 1929, pp. 34 ff.

extensive literature on the subject, the prudery which formerly characterized the social relations of young people is rapidly disappearing.<sup>13</sup> Already a considerable number of prospective husbands and wives take a practical view of the relationship they are about to enter, but they are found only among the more educated and intelligent groups; the great mass of the population still swears by "romance."

#### VOLUNTARY PARENTHOOD

If it were possible to evaluate the relative importance of the various developments which have influenced the family during the last two or three generations, it is certain that contraception would be near the top of the list. By its means parenthood has been brought under social control. No longer need the already overburdened parents inevitably face the necessity of feeding one more hungry mouth; no longer need wives and mothers whose physiques are not equal to the ordeal of childbearing go through life in the fear of conception and the agony of pregnancy. Childbearing can be postponed by young couples until their adjustments to each other have been made and economic preparations for the child have been completed. Children can be spaced appropriately, with due regard for their welfare as well as that of their mother. The number of children can be limited in accordance with the income of the family.

Naturally, the number of children can be limited for other and less worthy reasons than those given above. The desires of women to pursue a pleasurable social life or of men to avoid the expense and trouble of children doubtless operate in many instances to cause deliberate childlessness.<sup>14</sup> It may be argued that couples who do not want children should not have them, because every child has a right to be wanted. Such a conclusion is not always correct. The prevailing attitudes toward parenthood and children, as well as the appeal of the children

<sup>13</sup> Carpenter, Niles, "Courtship Practices and Contemporary Social Change in America," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March, 1932, Vol. CLX, pp. 38-44.

<sup>14</sup> Groves, Ernest R., *The Drifting Home*, 1926, p. 212.

themselves to the affections of adults, are usually sufficient guarantee that children will be warmly welcomed and solicitously cared for. It follows that when used to avoid parenthood by strong, healthy persons, capable of providing a satisfactory home environment for children, the practice of birth control may be contrary to the best interest of society—assuming, of course, as we must, that the human race is worth preserving.

Some means of birth control have been known to some people for thousands of years. The modern movement, however, began with the publication of Dr. Knowlton's *Fruits of Philosophy*, a book which received great publicity following the Bradlaugh-Besant trial in 1877. The defendants in this case were charged with having distributed Dr. Knowlton's book in England in violation of the obscenity laws. The shipment of this book through the mails was for many years not illegal in the United States. It was made a criminal offense in 1873, under obscenity laws enacted by Congress under the urge of Anthony Comstock. In spite of this fact and in spite of the opposition of a number of individuals and organizations, the birth control movement has gone steadily forward—not so rapidly nor so scientifically as if unhampered, but forward, nonetheless. Certainly there can hardly remain any literate adult in America who does not know more or less about methods of birth control. The subject has been debated at great length, pro and con, in numerous magazines. Scarcely any topic is so widely and persistently discussed in print. Materials which are intended for the purpose are freely sold and are advertised in the magazines under the thinnest of disguises. The various laws which define as criminal the use of the mails for disseminating information on contraception in face of the fact that such information is readily available present a conspicuous example of cultural lag.

#### URBANIZATION—APARTMENT HOUSING

The movement which has massed together great numbers of people in cities has brought with it numerous changed conditions which have affected the life of the family. One of the

more important of these changes is that resulting from urban housing. Gradually, as the demand for space in the large urban centers increases, living quarters become smaller and smaller. The single-family dwelling, situated on spacious grounds at some distance from the neighbors, has given way to multiple-family dwellings with rooms of minimum number and size. "Efficiency apartments" are devised so as to make a single room fulfill the functions of a complete house. Under these conditions it would appear that the privacy which is essential to family life could not be maintained, but the resources of man are many; here he has substituted social distance for the natural isolation of his former community and has worked out thereby a livable arrangement. City people are notorious for their slight knowledge of their neighbors. They neither know nor care who lives next door. By many observers this has been thought to be due to the multiplicity of city contacts, which left no time for the neighbors. More probably it is due to the insistence of the need for privacy. If the neighbors were admitted to the acquaintance of the family, they could never be excluded. Everyone concerned would be worn out with adjusting to the numerous social contacts necessarily resulting from such acquaintance, a situation which the tacit agreement of neighbors to ignore each other's existence successfully forestalls. Insofar as the nearness of other persons is not objectionable on account of physical disturbance, such as radios or loud conversation, the privacy of the family is not seriously diminished by city life.

Quite likely, however, the small size of city living quarters detracts from family life by making it less comfortable. To remain long "cooped up" in a small apartment may give the individual a feeling of being suppressed or confined, a feeling which is best relieved by leaving home for a time. Large gatherings in the home are difficult to manage. The absence of extra space makes it impossible to accommodate visitors for extended periods or even overnight. As a center for social life, the home is thereby severely handicapped.

STANDARDS OF LIVING<sup>15</sup>

With the establishment of the money economy has come the tendency to translate all values into monetary terms. The competitive process is sharpened, since everything can be reduced to a common denominator and compared exactly with everything else. Home life has come to be one of the chief outlets for the spending by which status is secured and maintained in the modern community. It becomes the duty, therefore, of every family to keep up as expensive a domestic establishment as it can afford. The expensiveness of one's own establishment as compared with others in the community is apparent to all, hence every effort must be made to avoid the imputation of inferiority which inexpensive living produces. The question of expenditures has thus become one of the major worries of the family. The best possible appearance must always be kept up. This requires careful allotment of expenditures for rent, clothing, automobile, and the like in accordance with standards of living current in the family's social class. Always there must be included a number of items whose main purpose is to give the possessor an appearance of prosperity.

## COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION

The constantly improving techniques of communication and transportation have affected the family by breaking down the isolation which it formerly enjoyed. The increase of outside contacts has necessarily decreased somewhat the dependence of the members upon contacts within the family group, to the consequent weakening of family bonds. Improved communication has served as a lubricant for the spread of cultural changes, so that innovations in fashion, in house furnishings, and even in the ceremonial of private family life become known all over the country almost as soon as they occur anywhere in the world.

<sup>15</sup> Veblen, Thorstein, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 1899, Chapter V, "The Pecuniary Standard of Living."

## COMMERCIALIZED LEISURE

Members of the family are also lured from home by entertainments offered by commercial entrepreneurs in the form of movies, shows, dances, athletic contests, and displays of every kind. This development is probably both cause and effect of some of the changes in family life. The existence of a number of people who are not satisfied with the recreations of the home constitutes a potential demand for recreation outside it, and the existence of such facilities tempts those who might otherwise have been content to remain at home.

## WEAKENING OF MORALS, RELIGION, AND LAW

The strength of the family lies in the mores under which the individual is brought into conformity with the group standards. These and other forms of social control, such as law and religion, secure much of their power from their supposed consistency and immutability. Modern communication has conveyed the information to many that the mores are not the same the world over and that what was once wrong may now be considered right. The mores, thus deprived of their essential rightness, lose a portion of their power as a means of control over human behavior. Expediency, rather than morality, then becomes the rule of action. Religion, as exemplified in the church, seems less compelling than formerly as a force determining human action. In these circumstances the family, except insofar as it can demonstrably offer advantages to the individual, will be neglected in favor of more individualistic interests.

## THE MODERN FAMILY

Since the family in America is at present in a stage of transition, it is difficult to describe the "typical" example. As a matter of fact, a good many different kinds of families are found in American society, representing every kind of monogamous family common to the civilized world. The various kinds tend to be localized; a spatial distribution can be readily noted. The



most conspicuous differences are those which appear in the families of the city and of the country, respectively. The latter, in general, possess more of the characteristics of the past; the former show the effects of recent change. Minor regional differences may also be observed. The city manifests wide differences within its own boundaries, as indicated by Mowrer's classification of the areas of the city according to the kind of family life found in each.<sup>16</sup> Groups differing in general cultural background, such as classes, immigration groups, or sects, not clearly marked off by residential areas, also differ in family life. The more cosmopolitan the group, the more "modern" its family life is likely to be.

The variations observed are of some magnitude. They prevent the making of generalizations which can be applied indiscriminately to every family in the land. Nevertheless, a set of characteristics may be noted which, if not truly typical, represents the form of family toward which change apparently is tending and which already is frequently encountered.

This family is inaugurated by a marriage based primarily upon romantic affection, for which years of exposure to stimuli from love stories and movies have furnished the preparation. Both husband and wife expect superhuman qualities in their mates and are somewhat saddened by the inevitable disillusionment. Most of them, however, make the best of the situation and reach an adjustment much more realistic than the anticipations of the honeymoon. They move into an apartment, hoping, vainly as it often turns out, that ultimately they will be financially able to occupy a single-family dwelling.

The partners begin married life with some knowledge of the nature of sex and of birth control. As a consequence, sexual difficulties due to ignorance and prudery are less frequent than formerly. Parenthood is postponed until several years after marriage in order that proper economic preparations may be made for the care of the child. The number of children is limited to three or less, partly because it is felt that the proper care can be provided only for this number, partly because it is

<sup>16</sup> Mowrer, Ernest R., *Family Disorganization*, 1927, p. 110.

considered somewhat unfashionable to have more, and partly because a larger number of children would so far reduce the standard of living of the family as seriously to affect their social status. Sometimes, of course, plans for limitation fail because of faulty birth control techniques.

In their recreational activities husband and wife are much together, often present at gatherings where they meet their mutual friends of both sexes. The conversation of these groups is free from excessive restraint, even sex matters being discussed without reticence. The opportunities of married persons to meet members of the other sex, together with the fact that divorce has lost much of the disapproval once attached to it, produces a situation in which separations of partners who do not get along well together are freely facilitated.

The utilitarian aspects of the home are few. Many of the household tasks, such as laundry, cooking, and cleaning, are either done outside the home or by servants supplied by the management as a part of its "service." The decline of household activities means that to maintain the same standard of living as before, the family must have a larger money income, which can be secured only by greater wage-earning activity on the part of the members of the family. The statistics of the change would seem to indicate an improved standard of living, an indication not necessarily in accord with the actual facts. Clearly a family is no better off if, instead of making its own soap, an equivalent amount of time and effort is spent in earning money to buy the soap in a store.

No sense of neighborliness motivates relations with other people living near by. Consequently, there is no reluctance to frequent moving from one apartment to another, as fancy or successful bargaining may dictate. Indications are that many modern families move as often as once a year. Children have no duties in connection with the operation of the household; consequently they are not trained in the acceptance of responsibility. Parents show great solicitude for the welfare of the children, often sacrificing much to promote their health, education, and social status. The children, therefore, early acquire

a feeling of their own value and of a position of equality with their parents. Since the parents are also approximately of equal standing in the family, the group becomes, at least as soon as the children reach adolescence, a sort of voluntary association of free spirits.

#### ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS OF THE MODERN FAMILY

Within its greatly contracted limits, the family remains a communistic consumption unit. The family income, whether earned by the father alone or by both parents, is divided among the members of the family according to the respective needs. The children, however, are not as a rule expected to contribute to their upkeep through earnings. With the increase of education and the decrease of child labor, respectively, children remain almost completely dependent until they are old enough to shift for themselves as adults. If, during their childhood and adolescence, they earn money, they are usually allowed to spend it as they choose. The amount is seldom enough to have any appreciable effect upon the family budget, whether included or left out.

Among the middle and upper classes, the family retains the function of providing for the transmission of the property of deceased persons to their descendants. In a class-organized society the importance of this function can scarcely be overemphasized. It may be doubted whether it would be possible without some such arrangement to maintain a class system based primarily upon economic status. Most of the large fortunes found in America are the accumulations of several generations of transmission of wealth from parents to their children. Owing to the narrowing of general opportunity which follows excessive concentration of wealth, democratic societies tend to interfere with inheritance of property as a function of the family through the levying of heavy taxes upon those who receive large legacies.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY AS A FAMILY FUNCTION

Whether for good or ill, the family continues to function as the chief agency through which personality traits are imparted to individuals. As the first primary group of which the individual is a member, the family has a unique opportunity to mold him in any chosen pattern. As a matter of fact, not much choice is exercised, since the members of the family cannot do other than transmit to the new arrivals the culture which they themselves have inherited.<sup>17</sup> In certain significant details, however, the family may exercise a vast influence, an influence which may quite largely dominate the individual's whole life. His habits of kindliness, honesty, altruism and respect for authority are usually acquired, if at all, in the family. A prototype of the larger society, this group gives the individual his early training in getting along with other people. Upon the success with which proper adjustments are made will depend very considerably the individual's success in getting along with people in the world outside the home.

## THE FAMILY CONFERS STATUS

Although considerably changed in this respect, the modern family is still of great importance as an agency for conferring status upon the individual. The child in the family automatically receives the same status as that of his parents, and parents, realizing this fact and desiring to provide well for their offspring, do their best to secure high social standing for the family. Their efforts usually take the form of heavy spending on home life, thereby maintaining a high standard of living. They will occupy an apartment in a high-rent section; they will keep servants, entertain expensively and drive large cars to the extent their means permit. Their success depends mostly upon their own efforts. High standing of the grandparents or of other relatives counts comparatively little. Similarly, the

<sup>17</sup> Glover, Katherine, and Dewey, Evelyn, *Children of the New Day*, 1934, pp. 184-5.

children, upon leaving home, carry but little support from their parents for their personal status.

#### FAMILY STATISTICS

Judged by statistics, marriage is popular in the United States and does not in the least suggest a disappearing family. In 1930, 60.5 per cent of the total population over the age of fifteen was reported as married. This represents a substantial increase over the percentage married in 1890, the earliest year for which figures are available, the percentage then being 56.4. Some of the increase may be attributed to changes in the composition of the population, but doubtless there has also been a real increase in the marriage rate.

With the rise in marriage rates there has been a decrease in average age at marriage. The proportion married in the lower age groups of the population has conspicuously increased since 1890. The size of the family has progressively decreased. From nearly five persons in 1890 it shrank to four in 1930. Day Monroe<sup>18</sup> found that the average size of the households included in her study was four; a slightly higher average, 4.1, was shown by the Census of 1930. It is not unlikely that the tendency toward smaller families will continue for some time in the future.

#### THE FAMILY AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM

It is apparent from the foregoing that, in spite of numerous changes, the family still performs many important functions with a high degree of success. Some of the changes are in the nature of necessary adaptations to the newer forms of economic activity. We cannot be sure that the present-day family does not yield as much happiness to its members as did the family of the past. Its very instability may be evidence of a greater adaptability of the family to the needs of individuals. Why, then, are the changes in the family so persistently regarded as a social problem?

<sup>18</sup> *Chicago Families*, 1932, p. 227.

The answer, if there be one, can probably be found in man's reluctance to accept change, even if advantageous to him. Change threatens the security of persons, whose lives are ordered on a plan which assumes that certain features of the social environment will remain fixed. The place of the family in the life scheme of the individual predisposes him to desire that the relationships created there remain unaltered. Stability, or the absence of change, has become through the centuries the chief virtue of the family.

It seems probable also that for many people the family has symbolic value, standing for society as a whole. For such persons, the family assumes an all-important rôle as the symbol of social solidarity. As long as the family remains intact, society is regarded as firm and sound; when the family weakens, the breakup of society is imminent. The affirmations by politicians of their determination to protect the home are designed to secure the support of those in whose scheme of values the family is all-important. So general is this kind of belief that the family of a generation ago is frequently spoken of as the bulwark of bourgeois society. Radicals have argued that its existence prevents desirable social change. The family thus becomes the center of controversy, from almost every viewpoint a social problem.

Finally, it appears that the diminution of the family group tends to intensify the expectations of satisfaction to be derived from family relationships. The fact that there are so few persons in the family makes each of them extremely necessary to the individual, and any change which results in the severing of family relationship is regarded as catastrophic. The individual's concern for the stability of the family is, therefore, greater now than in the time when that stability was not threatened.

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## DIVORCE AND SEPARATION

THE termination of marriage by divorce is no new thing. In many primitive societies, divorces were secured through mutual consent or by the will of one of the parties to the marriage. The fact of separation was in some instances regarded as in itself equivalent to divorce.<sup>1</sup> With the development of civilization, the free-and-easy divorce of the earlier day has tended to disappear, as more and more obstacles have been placed in the way of spouses seeking freedom. Never, however, has the way been barred completely. Even in the period when the Roman Catholic church controlled marriage in Europe and applied the doctrine that divorces *a vinculi matrimonii* were beyond the power of man to grant, means were available by which those sufficiently influential could escape their bonds. The usual method was through the procedure of annulment, by which separations equivalent to divorce were allowed. Annulment was based upon the theory that persons who were disqualified for marriage through legal or other disabilities could never marry and that even though they had participated in a marriage ceremony no marriage had ever really existed. The difficulties encountered in finding disabilities which could serve as grounds for annulment, and the general disapproval of separations of any kind, served to keep the number of divorces small.

The Protestant revolt brought with it tolerance for divorce under certain exceptional circumstances. It is to be noted, however, that the churches have always accepted divorce reluctantly. They have never approved of divorce for any reason other than adultery and desertion. These grounds were gen-

<sup>1</sup> Howard, George E., *A History of Matrimonial Institutions*, 1904, Vol. I, pp. 225 ff.



erally taken over from the canon law by the civil law when the state replaced the church as the chief agency controlling marriage. Other grounds have been added from time to time, so that, viewed over a period of two or three centuries, a clearly discernible trend in the direction of more liberal divorce laws can be observed. The change in this direction in the United States since the Civil War has, however, been slight, and certainly not at all commensurate with the steady increase in divorce rates.

#### DEFINITION OF DIVORCE

As shown by thousands of recent magazine articles and hundreds of books dealing with the problem of divorce and separation, the stability of the family is a matter of grave concern to American society. Though deprived of many of its former functions, the family is still highly important, if not actually indispensable, to the operation of our social system. We find it difficult to imagine the institutions of religion and the state existing without the family to furnish communicants and citizens, ready trained to take the places vacated by the elders. It is a notable fact that radicals, primarily interested in bringing about economic change, often attack the family—a technique justifiable only on the assumption that the family, because of its property-transmitting function, constitutes one of the main supports of the existing socio-economic order.

In the effort to preserve this institution, so vital to our society, we have brought to bear the various devices of social control. Society's interest in the family is shown in the safeguards built around the marriage contract, which has been made a publicly recorded agreement, unalterable in its terms even by the principals themselves. Thus the pair about to be married may not legally agree as part of the nuptial contract that they will separate at the end of a stipulated time or that the husband will contribute a definite sum toward the support of his wife or that the children shall be taught the religion of their mother. The candidates must accept the terms prescribed by society or not be married at all. Marriage vows, therefore, are unlike the

agreements of an ordinary contract, so unlike, indeed, that marriage is more properly described as a status than as a contract. Once married, the spouses are expected to fulfill the obligations of their vows as long as they both shall live.

Experience has shown that to meet this expectation is not always possible. Sometimes men and women do not discover until after the wedding that their spouses are uncongenial, ill-tempered, negligent, or cruel. Social pressure is exerted to compel the mismated unfortunates to make the best of their bargain, bad though it be. As a result, many an unhappy marriage has remained intact to the end, the pains of matrimonial bondage being less severe than those of social disapproval accompanying release. Nevertheless, a few have always ventured to break the marriage contract, no matter how stern the attitude of society or how severe the penalty. For the purpose of defining the status of such individuals, as well as to regulate and limit the dissolution of marriages, society has instituted divorce, which may be defined as a legally recognized termination of the status of marriage.

Unions entered into in violation of some or all the provisions of the marriage statutes are in some States held to be valid marriages. Under the rules of the common law a couple living publicly as husband and wife are considered to be married, even though they have never secured a marriage license or participated in a wedding ceremony. They need not even have had a private agreement to marry. On the other hand, a celebration in accordance with law may be held to constitute a valid marriage although followed by the immediate separation of the couple and a repudiation of the contract.

This important relation, so easily entered into, cannot be terminated in any such haphazard fashion. The securing of a divorce requires careful compliance with numerous provisions of law. The proceedings take the form of a civil suit in which the spouses are arrayed against each other as plaintiff and defendant, respectively. The statutes relating to divorce enumerate a variety of conditions which, when proved by the plaintiff, will supply the grounds for divorce.

Underlying the procedure is the assumption that only one of the spouses desires divorce and that the other is opposed to it. Actually the overwhelming majority of divorces are wanted by both spouses,<sup>2</sup> a fact which must be concealed from the court, lest the divorce be denied on account of the collusion of the litigants. A condition has resulted in which the spouses, with the tacit consent of all concerned, must resort to hypocrisy, deception, and even perjury to gain their ends. It can scarcely be doubted that the effect is to lessen public respect for courts and the law.

### DIVORCE RATES

The ever-mounting divorce rate of the United States has been the subject of much moralizing. It must be noted, however, that a high divorce rate is no new feature of American society. The exhaustive statistical studies of the United States Census Bureau reveal the fact that the number of divorces in proportion to the population was of considerable magnitude even in 1860. Since then, however, there has been a rapid and steady rise, with no noticeable tendency toward a decrease in the rate of increase.

The number of divorces has increased from about 10,000 a year in 1867 to more than 200,000 in 1929. Population increased during that period about 300 per cent, marriages almost 400 per cent and divorces about 2,000 per cent. Thus the rate of divorce advanced about five times as rapidly as the proportion of married population in the United States over a period of 63 years.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed there seems to be no sign of a slackening of the increase of divorce in the United States. One wonders whether there is a natural limit. . . . Any natural or mathematical limit to the divorce rate seems far removed, and it is quite conceivable that the increase may continue for some time.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "It has been indicated that but few cases are really contested. The number, near the truth and easy to remember, is 5 per cent." Marshall, Leon C., and May, Geoffrey, *The Divorce Court*, Vol. I, p. 19. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1932.

<sup>3</sup> Cahen, Alfred, *Statistical Analysis of American Divorce*, p. 21. New York: Columbia Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, 1932.

<sup>4</sup> Groves, Ernest R., and Ogburn, William F., *American Marriage and Family Relationships*, p. 129. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1928.

During the depression years, beginning with 1930, the number of divorces and the divorce rate in terms of marriages declined, reaching the low point of numbers in 1932 with a total of 160,338, and a low rate in 1933 with 150 divorces per 1,000 marriages. Since then both the rate and the numbers have risen. The number of divorces for 1937 has been estimated at 250,000.<sup>5</sup>

Comparison is frequently made of divorces in the United States and in certain foreign countries. Japan, once referred to as the one nation which had a higher rate than America, is now far below and shows a trend toward still lower rates. Canada and New Zealand, having cultural backgrounds similar to that of the United States, should furnish conditions enabling us to make a fair comparison. Both countries show distinctly lower rates, but both also show rising trends. The sudden increase in Canadian divorces following the World War indicates how strongly external factors may influence the stability of the family. Apparently the effect of the War has not been permanent, for, although the divorce rate of Canada has continued to rise in the western provinces, it has declined in the eastern. During recent years, Canada has had scarcely one tenth as many divorces in proportion to the population as the United States, and New Zealand has had less than one fourth.

#### DIVORCE IN THE DEPRESSION

The fact that divorces cost money is demonstrated by the drop in the rate following the extremely high rate of 1929. There may have been fewer estrangements, owing to a decrease in the economic opportunities for women, a circumstance which would probably cause many a discontented wife to think twice before starting out on her own. On the other hand, it cannot be maintained that married couples get along better during a depression than during a period of prosperity. From the fact that economic tensions are often present in family strife, it

<sup>5</sup> See Stouffer, Samuel A., and Spencer, Lyle M., "Recent Increases in Marriage and Divorce," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLIV, No. 4, January, 1939, pp. 551-4.

would appear that such strife might be more intense and frequent when shortage of money is general. Unfortunately, a discussion on this point must remain largely in the field of conjecture; the statistics record only those separations which are legalized and finalized by divorce.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF DIVORCE STATISTICS

Criticisms of the common method of calculating the divorce rate suggest that marriage may be even farther from permanence than is shown by statistics. Inasmuch as few marriages end in divorce the same year in which they are contracted, it is obviously inaccurate to compare marriages and divorces of a given year. It would be more nearly correct to compare the number of divorces with the number of marriages terminated by death in a given period. Making such a comparison by means of estimates, I. M. Rubinow<sup>6</sup> has concluded that 25 per cent of all marriages are dissolved by divorce. A later study by Alfred Cahen<sup>7</sup> indicates that Rubinow's estimates were erroneous and that at the present rate a marriage has only a little less than five chances in six of terminating in death. Even so it must be admitted that the United States has an extraordinarily high divorce rate.

#### VARIATIONS IN THE DIVORCE RATE

Owing to the cultural heterogeneity of the United States, as well as to certain adventitious factors, the divorce rate shows considerable territorial variation. The range extends all the way from no divorces at all in South Carolina to a total equaling three fourths of the marriages in Wyoming. A correlation between the rate and the ease with which divorces can be secured in the various States may be observed. In general, the rates are low in the eastern and northeastern States, high in the South and Middle West and still higher in the Pacific Coast States. It has been supposed that territorial differences in rates might be the result of persons migrating to States where

<sup>6</sup> "After Divorce—What?" *New Republic*, Vol. LXIII, July 16, 1930, pp. 226-8.

<sup>7</sup> *Statistical Analysis of American Divorce*, 1932, pp. 98-109.

divorces can be obtained easily. Cahen concludes, however, that only about three per cent of the total number of divorces have been granted to persons who migrated for the purpose of securing them.<sup>8</sup>

### RELIGION AND DIVORCE

Ever since the Christian church successfully brought marriage under its control, it has been a powerful force in favor of lasting unions. Some branches of the church, notably the Roman Catholic, make no provision whatever for divorce, allowing only separations with no right to remarriage. Others are less severe, but none of the well-established denominations are as liberal toward divorce as most of the State laws. The church, therefore, may justly be regarded as a restraining influence tending to prevent divorces. In the case of the Jews, a strong sense of the importance of the family, though not of distinctly religious character, serves the same purpose. A correlation exists between the doctrines of marriage professed by the various denominations and the prevalence of divorce among the members. Protestants of the so-called reformed denominations show the highest rates, Roman Catholics the lowest.

### OTHER FACTORS CORRELATED WITH DIVORCE

The reports of the United States Census Bureau show considerable variability in the divorce rate according to the occupational group to which the husband belonged. Occupations characterized by high mobility, by frequent contacts with marriageable persons, and by fairly large incomes have high divorce rates. Actors, musicians, commercial travelers, telegraph and telephone operators, and physicians appear at the top of the list; blacksmiths, draymen, clergymen, and agricultural laborers are at the bottom. In conformity with these differences, the urban population shows a much higher rate than the rural population, and the rate among the native-born exceeds that of the foreign-born.

<sup>8</sup> *Statistical Analysis of American Divorce*, 1932, p. 67.

## CAUSAL FACTORS—INTRODUCTORY

Almost all human defects and many unfavorable social conditions have been presented by one or more of the writers on the subject as causes for divorce. Among the causes classifiable as inherent in the individual are feeble-mindedness, mental disease, incompetence, and intemperance; among those inherent in the situation are adultery, incompatibility, poverty, feminism, hasty marriage, lack of religion, inadequacy of the law, and changed functions of the family.

The causal factors found by Willcox are the two conceptions of marriage and law, religious and secular; the popularization of law; laxity in changing and administering the law; age at marriage; the emancipation of woman; growth of cities; increase of industrialism; the spread of discontent; two ideals of the family, the Roman and the Teutonic.

The causal factors given by Lichtenberger are the stress of modern economic life; modern standards of living; pressure of modern economic life upon the home; passing of the economic function of the family; economic emancipation of women; individualism; popularization of law; increase in popular learning; improved social status of women; equal standards of morals; higher ideals of domestic happiness; a new basis of marriage; mutual attraction and preference.<sup>9</sup>

Without regard to what the legal causes indicate, certain factors in the choice of causes are apparent. The physical inferiority of women precludes, in most cases, possibility of her conviction upon the charge of cruelty. A woman is more bound to her primary group than a man is to his, hence adultery is more easily proved against her. The mores forbid drunkenness among women, consequently cases prosecuted against her upon this charge are rare. On the other hand, the fact that the man is the stronger physically makes cruelty a more common plea of the woman. Adultery is hard to prove against the man, because he is less restricted to primary contacts and his irregularities are consequently more difficult to detect. Furthermore, infidelity of the husband is more likely to be condoned or forgiven than is unfaithfulness of the wife. Drunkenness, while not in the mores, is tolerated in the man, and is thus more common among men than women.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Mowrer, Ernest R., *Family Disorganization*, p. 36. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927.

<sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 60.

Both by a priori reasoning and cited authorities, four important factors, contributing to increasing divorce . . .

1. The rise of economic production
2. The growth of cities
3. The increase of women wage-earners
4. The declining birth rate.<sup>11</sup>

The report of a court of domestic relations gives such an analysis of over 1,500 cases, listing 25 causes, and carefully calculating the percentage of cases due to each. A summary of these percentages grouped under five heads is as follows:

	PER CENT
1. Distinct sex factors	39.03
2. Alcohol and narcotic drugs	37.00
3. Temperamental traits	15.40
4. Economic issues	6.27
5. Mental and physical troubles	2.30 <sup>12</sup>

#### LEGAL GROUNDS

The legal grounds upon which divorces may be granted are provided for in the statutes of the respective States. These and the prevailing attitude regarding what should properly be considered grounds for divorce determine what charges shall be made by the plaintiff in his statement to the court. The items presented in the table below indicate the influence of the law

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE  
IN 1867 AND 1928 \*

Legal grounds	Percentage in 1867	Percentage in 1928
Adultery .....	33	9
Cruelty .....	13	47
Desertion .....	41	32
Drunkenness .....	3	2
Neglect to provide .....	2	7
Minor grounds .....	8	3

\* Adapted from Cahen, Alfred, *Statistical Analysis of American Divorce*, pp. 35, 41. New York: Columbia Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, 1932.

upon the grounds claimed in divorce actions, and a comparison of the figures for 1867 and 1928 shows how public opinion has

<sup>11</sup> Cahen, Alfred, *Statistical Analysis of American Divorce*, p. 129. New York: Columbia Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, 1932.

<sup>12</sup> Colcord, Joanna, *Broken Homes*, p. 21. New York: The Russell Sage Foundation, 1919.



changed. In view of what we know about the mutual desire for freedom on part of most of the couples who seek divorce, it is reasonable to conclude that the cruelty and desertion, which together account for 79 per cent of the divorces for 1928, were almost entirely spurious. A study of divorces by the National Divorce Reform League shows that infidelity is the cause of only 1.8 per cent of the divorces in New York State, whereas incompatibility accounts for 70 per cent.<sup>13</sup> The change in the proportions of the several grounds for divorce from 1867 to 1928 cannot be accounted for as a result of changes either in social behavior or in the law. We can only conclude that there has been a change in the attitude of the public as to what shall constitute proper grounds for a divorce suit. From all of which it is apparent that consideration of the legal grounds of divorce gives almost no clue to the true causes.

#### INDIVIDUALISM AND DIVORCE

An understanding of divorce can only be gained from a consideration of the attitudes toward it which prevail in our society. The commonly accepted beliefs, whether rationalized as good or bad, are closely followed in the behavior of individuals. As long as divorcees were regarded as pariahs, the divorce rate was low. When the status of woman was no higher than that of a slave, the number of divorces sought by and granted to wives was necessarily small.

On the whole, Americans may be said to disapprove of divorce. Such disapproval is clearly recognizable as a part of the heritage from Europe, more particularly England, where even now a divorce is something to be ashamed of. In America, the power of this attitude as a determiner of behavior is weakened not so much by any change in the attitude itself as by the development of contradictory attitudes growing out of changed experiences.

Foremost among the recently developed attitudes which affect the family is the complex bundle of related tendencies best known as individualism. There is a distinct difference

<sup>13</sup> *The New York Times*, October 29, 1938.

between the interests of the individual and of the group; often they are diametrically opposed. In most early societies a conflict between the two rarely took place, so completely unnoticed was the individual in the general ideas of group welfare. In our day such conflicts are frequent, and in many cases the victory goes to the individual. It may be observed, however, that modern society, with its emphasis upon the right and duty of the individual to "live his own life," develops persons of great variety. That men and women of the diverse types produced do not get along well together as husbands and wives is not surprising. Popular sympathy is with the individual and against the group. The husband who refuses to tolerate his mother-in-law or the wife who rebels against the housework which interferes with her career both find ready listeners who nod approval of the contemplated separation.

Among the varieties of individualism which are damaging to the family are the romantic complex (described in Chapter 2) and the independence of women. While not peculiarly American, the first of these appears to have reached its most luxuriant efflorescence in this country. It is expected as a matter of course that considerations of personal preference and romantic attachment will occupy first place in determining the choice of a life partner, and that family welfare and economic prospects will receive scant attention. A good deal of mawkish sentiment supports this view, even among people who sincerely decry divorce. The rather frequent *mésalliances* of the heiress-and-chauffeur type in America testify to the unhappy results of carrying out to the extreme the advice implicitly embodied in this attitude.

It should not be forgotten, however, that individual freedom in the choice of mates may also result in the union of congenial, compatible personalities. A priori reasoning seems to point definitely to such an outcome. Probably, therefore, the damaging effect of the romantic complex is to be found, not in the free choice of mates, but in the acceptance of the romantic belief that the honeymoon will last forever.

## INDEPENDENCE OF WOMEN

Although it is quite possible that the social gains resulting from the increased independence of women may be far greater than the losses, the latter, from the viewpoint of the family alone, undoubtedly outweigh the former. Closely following the progress of emancipation has come the increased divorce rate. Freedom for women to secure divorce on terms at least as easy as those allowed to men has been one of the goals of the feminist movement. It is possible to judge with fair accuracy the status of the women in any group in Western society from a knowledge of the frequency of divorce. A century ago, divorces were nearly always sought by husbands; now they are sought by wives in more than seven-tenths of the cases and the persistence of the trend indicates that it has not yet reached a permanent level. Bertrand Russell<sup>14</sup> regards the easy divorce system of America as only a transitional state now being undergone by the family in process of changing from bi-parental to maternal dominance.

## MOBILITY AND DIVORCE

Certain social conditions, most of them connected with recent changes in economic life, provide an environment quite favorable to divorce. The arrangements of office work, as now generally found, may be mentioned as an example. The professional man or male office worker and his female secretary, stenographer, or assistant are likely to develop personal attachments which endanger the marriage tie. More especially is this likely to be true if one of the partners in this business relationship, usually the woman, is unmarried.<sup>15</sup> Specialization in production has taken the workers of the family far from home; improvements in communication have multiplied contacts. The result is a high mobility, social as well as physical, which greatly interferes with the development of the fixations and habits necessary for stable family life. In conse-

<sup>14</sup> *Marriage and Morals*, 1929, p. 238.

<sup>15</sup> Bjerre, Poul, *The Remaking of Marriage*, 1931, p. 41.

quence, some marriages never come to mean more than casual acquaintance and others are allowed to fall apart from lack of sufficient contacts to keep them in repair. The breakdown of group controls following the great increase in mobility removes an important check upon the individual who, for reasons not socially recognized as valid, wishes to be free from the bonds of matrimony.

#### CHANGED ATTITUDES

The wide publicity given to divorce and the frequency with which it occurs puts it in the mind of every person in the land as one of the solutions for marital difficulties. The candidates for marriage, however certain they may be of the success of their venture, can hardly avoid reminding themselves that if the worst should come a divorce may be secured. When disagreements appear, the divorce at once suggests itself. Or if it should not, a well-informed friend or relative is sure to express surprise that this way out has not been chosen.

Prominent people, many of them personally admirable, are frequent litigants in the divorce courts. Some of them appear so often that they may be said to practice a species of serial polygamy. The influence of the example of these people upon the masses who read the newspapers is considerable. The high social position of the divorce-seekers described in the papers is, of course, something to be envied; their behavior, therefore, is regarded as something to be imitated.

#### THE LAW

The variety and confusion existing among the divorce laws of the United States is not conducive to the building up of a consistent and sensible attitude toward divorce. Too strict a law is likely to breed disrespect on account of its failure to take account of marital difficulties generally recognized as serious enough to warrant a divorce. Similarly, the frank commercial ends of the laws in certain States tend to remove the last shred of any notion of the dignity of law that might still remain among us.

The assumption that divorces are to be granted only when one spouse has committed a specific offense against the other, which that other has not condoned, results in contempt for the law itself and, consequently, for the institution it is designed to protect. An estranged couple, having found by repeated trials that they cannot live together, go to a lawyer to ask his advice regarding the procedure of securing a divorce. They are told that if they both admit wanting it, they cannot secure it. He will, of course, help them out of the difficulty. Perhaps there has been an act recognized in the laws of the State as grounds for divorce. If not, an act must be committed, such as, say, desertion. Thereupon suit may be brought by one spouse against the other. All reference to the fact that both husband and wife want the divorce must be kept hidden, since, if the court should discover any such feeling on part of the litigants, the divorce might be denied on the ground that there had been collusion in the attempt to secure it. Doubtless the judge often recognizes the true state of affairs, but realizing, as many others do, that the mutual desire of the litigating parties for a dissolution of the marriage is the best possible reason for granting it, he looks only at the evidence presented and grants the decree. Indeed, he has no choice but to decide the issue on the basis of the evidence offered. That one of the parties resides outside the State and is therefore not within the jurisdiction of the court, ordinarily makes no difference; the divorce is granted just the same. This practice has resulted in a situation in which a man and a woman may be divorced in one State and remain married in another. The failure of the law to meet expectations, together with the dissembling practiced by all concerned in complying with the provisions, robs the proceeding of its power as a means of social control. But laxity of the law can scarcely be blamed for its failure. The divorce rate has steadily risen even in States where the law has remained unchanged for many decades.

It has been suggested that if wives were not assured that they could win alimony with their divorces, there would be

few divorce suits, the implication being that the law should be so changed as to permit no alimony. Perhaps there is some truth in the suggestion. A woman without an occupation and without inclination to acquire one, accustomed to an easy existence or burdened with the care of children, might well hesitate before throwing herself on the scant mercies of the world. She might decide to endure extremely harsh treatment from her husband instead. However, to argue against alimony is, in effect, to argue for a lowered status for women. And it is to be noted, incidentally, that comparatively few divorcees receive alimony and that high divorce rates are found in jurisdictions where alimony is not granted. In a few cases, highly publicized, men have been imprisoned for unwillingness or inability to pay alimony. This is so much like imprisonment for debt that public sympathy is readily enlisted on behalf of the prisoner. A movement is under way to remedy this anomaly in our legal system through appropriate legislation.<sup>16</sup>

#### SEPARATIONS

Deterred by fear of publicity, by religious scruples, or by other factors, some husbands and wives who cannot agree separate without securing a divorce. In some cases no act regarded as grounds for divorce has occurred; in other cases they do not have money enough to prosecute the suit; in still others a regard for the welfare of children keeps them out of the courts. Many of these separations mark the end of a family just as completely as any divorce and are equivalent to divorces in all respects, save only that the separation is not legally recognized. Possibly the way to negotiation for reconciliation is a little less obstructed than in the case of the divorce, since friends and relatives have less opportunity for expressing amazement or sympathy at every new turn of events. However, many divorced couples are subsequently reunited, some

<sup>16</sup> "The Alimony Racket," *The American Mercury*, June, 1933, Vol. XXIX, pp. 237-44.

as spouses, others as friends or lovers. It appears, in fact, that the desire to remarry has had nothing to do with the increase in the divorce rate.<sup>17</sup>

Since the separated couple does not secure the sanction of society for the dissolution of the marriage, the union is presumed still to exist, and no record of the separation is made. Many of the separations, moreover, are partial or temporary. In some instances estranged husbands and wives, afraid to face the condemnation or the sympathy of the world, continue to occupy the same house, hiding from public view the wreck they have made of their married life. For these reasons we have no statistics on separations, nor even a reliable estimate of their number. It may be assumed that they bear an inverse relationship to the number of divorces, since an increase in the latter is probably accompanied by, if not due to a change in the mores permitting more separations, actual and potential, to be brought into the divorce court. For the group of separated spouses, as a whole, the problems of adjustment are so much like those of the divorcee that the two can well be treated together. Such advantages as separated spouses have for reconciliation are more than offset by the disadvantage of not being able to enter new unions.

#### SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF DIVORCE AND SEPARATION

If divorces and separations were only figures in a tabulation, representing nothing more than a somewhat embarrassing but brief courtroom scene for the plaintiff in each case, the social problem of divorce would be of minor importance. The effect upon the stability of the institution of marriage might be passed with the suggestion that marriage, like the Sabbath, was made for man, not man for marriage. But a glance into the lives of divorced persons of various types is sufficient to demonstrate that great suffering is endured by many, both before and after the event. Perhaps the accepted belief that divorces are more or less immoral may have suppressed the real sympathy of the community and obscured the sufferings of the individuals con-

<sup>17</sup> Cahen, Alfred, *Statistical Analysis of American Divorce*, 1932, p. 109.

cerned. At all events, only the children involved in divorce proceedings have received much attention in the literature of the subject.

It is true that comparatively few divorced persons find their way into the records of social failure by way of the relief agency. This may be explained in part by the fact that divorce as a solution for family difficulties is more likely to be sought by the well-to-do than by the poorer classes. Furthermore, a divorcee may sometimes anticipate the break and prepare for it; in rare instances she has a second husband waiting to take the place of the first as soon as she is free. The children, of course, still have two parents, each as legally responsible for the offspring after the divorce as before.

Let it not be supposed, for all this, that divorced persons have no economic difficulties. Lawyers, doctors, teachers, and clergymen often find their incomes jeopardized when they become involved in divorce suits. Even men in occupations where personal relations are of little importance may find themselves discriminated against when their marital troubles are aired by the press. Divorced women find economic adjustment difficult, because it may require learning the technique of an occupation from the very beginning and enduring a downward revision of the standard of living to bring it within the range of the available income.

One of my biggest worries during those first few months, both before I gave up my apartment and after was wondering whether or not I would be able to make my money meet my needs. You see, I'd never been out on my own before, and I didn't know how I was going to come out. Of course, I'd seen all this coming about six months before the break, and I'd gone to school and prepared myself for self-support, but still I didn't know whether I was going to make both ends meet.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Waller, Willard Walter, *The Old Love and the New*, p. 227. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1930. This study, from which is taken much of the information on the social consequences of divorce herein presented, gives a most excellent analysis of the personal difficulties of the divorcee.



## EFFECTS UPON PERSONALITY

The most serious consequences of divorces are the disastrous effects, temporary or permanent, upon the personalities of the divorcees and their children. The personality being what it is, namely, a function of human relationships, it depends for its very existence upon such relationships and for its stability upon their continuance and their sameness. A series of habitual relations between two persons cannot be suddenly broken off without leaving great rifts in the personalities of both individuals, subjectively very painful. It follows, therefore, that the separation of a husband and wife who have lived together for a considerable period is almost certain to cause suffering. This is true even if the relationship itself has not been especially pleasant. A person may become so well adjusted to continual quarreling as really to suffer a sense of loss when the quarrelsome person goes away.

Furthermore, the divorcing of a cruel or negligent husband does not always leave the ex-wife emotionally free to form new attachments. There is the faint possibility that the former husband may miraculously reform and return. Memories of the past rise from time to time to disturb the present. Deliberate effort is required to dismiss these memories and to crush out the longing for the absent one. An interesting adjustment to this kind of situation is described by Bjerre:

The *telephone marriage* is a modern type of relationship which is becoming more and more common. The parties are divorced but have not succeeded in severing all ties. One continually needs the other's advice in all the details of life, or even needs to hear the other's voice though there be nothing of importance to say. These marriages generally run their course without great disturbance. In case of a clash it is easy enough to lay down the transmitter and abstain from ringing up the partner until calm has been regained.<sup>19</sup>

The sufferings of divorced persons, moreover, must be borne in silence; society does not permit their expression. The

<sup>19</sup> From Bjerre, Poul, *The Remaking of Marriage*, p. 249. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

widow may legitimately mourn her deceased husband. His friends are still her friends, and her place in the community is relatively unchanged. The ex-wife dare not admit that she misses her former husband. Her pride, already hurt by the necessity of publicly confessing the failure of her marriage, requires that she present herself as a victim, a martyr, sinned against by the brute now happily got rid of. Any other position would be anomalous, since the community insists upon defining the situation as one of conflict. Her adjustment to the community is complicated by the fact that her status is lowered. The community divides itself for her into two groups, those who side with her husband and those who side with her. The former criticize and blame her; the latter sympathize, in a way which is too much like pity to be comforting. As shown in the following case, it may become positively painful, demanding the building up of defenses in themselves detrimental to friendship.

I was cursed with over-sympathetic friends. While it was all very recent in my mind I needed their active sympathy, and was not ashamed to cry in their presence. That soon passed away and I could have wished they didn't know so much. They were always wanting to sympathize and that came to be a great drain upon me. I knew what they were thinking: "Poor girl. She loves him so! She'll never be the same again. Her life is ruined. She has been treated shamefully. We'll let her know where we stand all right." I didn't want their sympathy any more and I didn't want them to hate my husband. So I treated my friends, after those first few months, very politely, and I'm afraid, very distantly. For the rest, I cultivated a hard bright cheerfulness and an air of efficiency which dried up sympathy at its source. From a pose, the thing got to be a habit with me. It was a good habit, and helped more than anything else to build up my morale.<sup>20</sup>

#### DIVORCE AND THE CHILDREN

The devastation wrought in the lives of children by divorce is no less than among their parents. It is probably fortunate

<sup>20</sup> Waller, Willard Walter, *The Old Love and the New*, pp. 184-5. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1930.

that some couples who would separate if childless decide to make the best of their differences and carry on for the sake of the children, though the power of the child to hold his quarreling parents together has been overestimated. According to Marshall and May, "young children are markedly present in divorce suits."<sup>21</sup> Two parents in the home are likely to be better than one, even if they disagree; though doubtless there are instances of this kind in which the conflict between the parents is so intense that the children would suffer less harm from one parent alone than from both.

The excessive delinquency rate charged up to the children of the broken home points to many unsuccessful attempts at social adjustment among the members of the family. Of their personal sufferings we know little, though we have no reason to suppose they are slight or nonexistent. Children are extremely sensitive. Many a psychic trauma, the result of early experiences in an unhappy family, has been uncovered by the psychoanalysts in their attempts to heal diseased personalities.

From the viewpoint of society as a whole, it is a great misfortune for the home to become a battleground upon which are repeatedly enacted scenes of conflict between the parents, especially on account of the children. Under such circumstances, the altruistic sentiments so essential to comfortable living in a world where might far too often makes right are likely to receive little emphasis. A child brought up in such an environment learns nothing of unselfishness or self-sacrifice, and no agencies outside the home are equipped to take its place in teaching the child to have regard for others. The respect for the wisdom and authority of his parents, which he might acquire untaught as a part of his experience, is undermined and destroyed by the attacks of the parents upon each other. At best he becomes a partisan, taking sides with one parent against the other. When, upon his escape from the family, he transfers the ways he has learned to his relations with other members of society, he will think of himself and his own welfare to the exclusion of that of his fellows. He is even quite

<sup>21</sup> *The Divorce Court*, Vol. I, 1932, p. 90.

likely to carry over into the home he establishes for himself a good many of the antisocial attitudes which he learned in childhood from his fighting parents.

#### DIVORCE AND SECURITY

Lasting relationships of friendship and affection are absolutely essential to the maintenance of a wholesome personality. A person needs not only someone to love and to be loved by, but someone whose constancy can be counted on. The uncertain status of the child of divorced parents easily gives rise to a feeling of insecurity. An inferiority complex similar to the inferiority of the stepchild and the adopted child may easily result. Or there may be, as in the case following, an antisocial adaptation which, while it may work after a fashion in the family situation, cannot fail to cause serious maladjustment when tried out in a larger world.

A wealthy couple are divorced after ten years of wretched quarreling. Two children, a boy of nine and a girl of five, remain in the custody of their unhappy, embittered, socially ambitious mother. Long before the divorce the mother has begun to devote herself to her son, to whom she offers the loving attentions that a woman gives to a mature man. As her relations with her husband grow more strained, and of course more markedly after the divorce, she takes the boy into her confidence, she uses him as an escort, she seeks his ministrations when she is ill or indisposed, she discusses her friends with him, they read the newspapers together, she tells him again and again that he is the only one she has left. The boy plays his rôle to his mother's satisfaction, and thus secures constant praise and appreciation from her and from most of her women friends.

Meanwhile, his younger sister, who has been her father's pet and a spoiled but loving daughter to her father, finds herself alone. She is forced to seek out the company of her mother, who intrusts her to the care of a French governess. What little companionship the child receives from her mother is bestowed grudgingly. She soon discovers that she can increase this maternal attention in two ways—by unsatisfactory behavior and by illness. True, the former involves the pain of rebuke and punishment; the latter, confinement and unpleasant medicines, not to mention doctors who even doubt her illnesses. But this behavior is successful in obtaining her mother's solicitude, and that reward is apparently worth the price.

She has also begun to punish her father for his absence. When he visits her she is extremely rude and unpleasant to him, accepts his gifts ungraciously, and even offers him her opinion that he is not a very nice man. Her father does what his paternal duty commands: he discusses his little daughter's rudeness with her mother, blaming his wife, of course, for what he considers the child's inadequate training. The mother meets the child's deviations of conduct with criticism, constant correction, deprivations by way of penalty, and other forms of punishment.

This treatment of the girl, who is now ten years old, is grist to her unconscious mill. She achieves, on an antisocial level, an eminence that she despairs of ever attaining on any plane of good behavior, first, because of the discouragement she draws out of the carping criticism of a frustrated mother; second, because of constant unfavorable comparison with the paragon, her elder, father-impersonating brother; and thirdly, because of the essential insecurity of her own fatherless life. For years she has been a serious problem at home; she has recently become a serious problem at school. Meanwhile, the brother, now fourteen, has reacted in an unfortunate manner to the rôle of husband forced upon him. Tall and robust though he is, his manner, his attitude toward other boys, and his growing disinterest in girls reveal an alarming disposition to identify himself, not with his absent father, but with the omnipresent mother. Effeminacy is not a healthy symptom in a strong young man of nearly fifteen.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Anonymous, "Divorce—and After, IV, The Insecurity of the Child," *The Nation*, March 19, 1930, Vol. CXXX, No. 3376, pp. 323-4.

## FAMILY DESERTION AND ILLEGITIMACY

WHEN a man and a woman establish a family, they are expected to fulfill certain obligations toward each other and toward their children. Some of these obligations are deemed of sufficient importance to merit the support of law; others are enforced only by the informal compulsions of the mores and folkways. To the husband is assigned the rôle of breadwinner. He must provide the economic goods needed by his wife and children in accordance with his ability. If he should become incapacitated through illness or injury, his wife must take his place. In some parts of the world, though not generally in America, adult sons and daughters are required to support their economically incapacitated parents. Usually the laws of the state go little beyond the enforcing of such elementary duties as these.

Other responsibilities of the parents chiefly have to do with transmitting to their children the cultural heritage of the society in which they live. In our time, this task has assumed such immense proportions that most parents could not possibly carry it out unaided. Social agencies have been developed which offer assistance in various ways. The public schools give academic and vocational training; the churches supply ethical and moral teaching. Community organizations of many kinds help boys and girls to adjust themselves to the demands of social life. A passive willingness is all that is necessary on the part of the parent to make these opportunities available to the child. When there are laws on the subject, they go no farther than to prevent the parent from denying to his child the privileges and opportunities provided by society.

There are still other duties of parents, more important, probably, than any of the foregoing, since they are concerned with the development of the child's personality. How well a person succeeds in his relations with others depends in large part upon the training he has received in his home. His fundamental outlook on the world and, possibly, the happiness or unhappiness of his life as a whole, are the result of influences received from the parents. No law can be so phrased or enforced as to compel parents to develop first-rate personalities in their children. Beyond the protection of children from physical abuse or neglect, the state is powerless. The enforcement of this obligation is left to the mores, which are so effective that in the majority of cases parents willingly make great sacrifices in order to give their children the best training they are able to provide. In some cases, however, parents not only take their responsibilities lightly, but even try to evade them altogether. Such parents and the sufferings incident to their actions constitute the subject of this chapter.

#### DEFINITION

Desertion and illegitimacy are considered together because of the fundamental similarity of the situations involved. The terms themselves do not indicate these similarities. Desertion calls attention to the fact that a parent has left his family to shift for itself; illegitimacy emphasizes the lack of a marriage certificate. The latter concept may be satisfactory enough from the legal standpoint, but it is clearly inadequate for sociology. The emphasis upon the ceremony implies that the property-transferring function of the family is of prime importance. From the viewpoint of sociology this function is of less importance than the personal relations involved.

In accordance with the accepted meanings of the two terms, moral opprobrium in the past has fallen upon the defaulting parent (usually the father) in desertion cases, and upon the mother and her child in illegitimacy cases. Modern social workers, however, have come to recognize that both are essentially the same. An unmarried mother and her child consti-

tute a deserted family in a real sense. Though unsanctioned by law, such a family must be recognized by the sociologist as existing *de facto*. Many illegitimate families under the designation of common-law marriages function perfectly as long as both parents fulfill their duties toward each other and their children. It is only when the deserted mother is forced to appeal for charity that the fact of illegitimacy is discovered. Legislation and social work dealing with illegitimacy are gradually coming to treat the unmarried mother as a deserted wife and to hold the father responsible in the same way as if he were a deserting husband.

Biologically the unmarried mother and father and their child constitute a family group and as such present a family problem. Social case work with unmarried parents and their children involves an openminded and sympathetic approach to the parents, not as delinquents needing punishment but as socially maladjusted individuals.<sup>1</sup>

A sound plan of help for the unmarried mother and her child must seek to bring both into as normal a relationship as possible with society and must use every means available to maintain them in this relationship. For the purposes of constructive treatment, they should be regarded as an incomplete family group containing the nucleus of a home. In this respect they resemble the widow and child and the deserted wife and child.

It is preferable to consider them in the deserted wife group. The situations are practically identical except for the formality of marriage. This classification makes provision for the possible completion of the family group through the reunion of the parents.<sup>2</sup>

#### EXTENT OF DESERTION AND ILLEGITIMACY

Our knowledge of the extent of desertion and illegitimacy in the United States is by no means as complete as could be desired. This is especially true of desertions. As in the case of separations, we have no statistical machinery for recording them. Desertions, moreover, do not involve any clear-cut act such as does a marriage ceremony or a divorce, and records of

<sup>1</sup> Watson, Amey Eaton, *Illegitimacy*, 1923, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> Cleveland (Ohio) Federation for Charity and Philanthropy, *The Unwed Mother and her Child*, 1916, p. 14.



them are consequently difficult to secure. Not every husband who says he is leaving for good keeps his word. Some who leave with the avowed intention of staying away return home time after time. Others, not having said anything about their intentions, may be deserting or they may be kept away by lack of sufficient funds to pay their fares home. In many instances, the deserted wife probably does not know at the beginning of her husband's absence whether or not she is finally deserted.

Her unwillingness to be deserted is another factor contributing to our ignorance of the problem. Reluctant to admit even to herself that she has been deserted, she is still more reluctant to admit it to her neighbors and relatives. Hopefully she will await her husband's return, excusing his delay as best she can. When at last there can be no doubt of her status, she sometimes deliberately concocts a story of her husband's death in a distant place and foists it upon the community. If the story is believed, the deserted wife is counted among the widows, where it is respectable to be, and no record of the desertion is possible.

In the case of illegitimacy there is greater incentive to hide the facts, but also greater difficulty in so doing. The birth of a new person into the community is not easy to conceal, and his lack of proper family status is at once apparent if the mother is not married. If she is married, the fact of the child's illegitimacy may in some instances be kept from public knowledge. This requires, however, either the deception or the connivance of the husband, both difficult of achievement. The obstacles to the concealing of illegitimacy are further increased by the machinery for keeping vital statistics. Most States have laws requiring the registration of all births with information regarding the marital status of the parents. A fair degree of accuracy is attained in many areas, so that we may say we can estimate well enough the number of illegitimate births.

#### DESERTION RATES

Since there are no records of deserters as such, we are forced to secure our knowledge of their number from the cases in

which economic necessity has brought them to our attention.<sup>3</sup> It is quite probable that but for economic necessity the deserted but legally married spouse would not usually remain long in this category, more particularly since the status of a divorcee is now somewhat higher than that of a deserted wife or husband. The exceptions would consist almost entirely of cases in which religious considerations have prevented an appeal to the courts. In the absence of the means to secure a divorce, the wife is forced to admit she is deserted before she is given the help she needs. Since this admission is almost always reluctantly made, many will endure great hardship rather than submit to the searching examination of the welfare agency. That the number of deserted wives who apply for charity is much smaller than the total is indicated by the fact that application for help is often not made for many years after the departure of the husband. Doubtless many deserted families become and remain self-supporting.

Even with these subtracted, a large number of deserted wives remain who are driven by necessity to seek aid. Seven to thirteen per cent of the needy families cared for by charitable agencies in normal times are deserted. One fourth of the children committed to institutions in New York City have been rendered destitute by desertion.<sup>4</sup> Alfred Cahen quotes the Report of the Desertion Committee, Compiled from the Questionnaires (New York, 1928), as follows:

The urban population of the United States in 1920 amounted to over 50,000,000 people. With a probable 100 desertions per 100,000 population, the total desertions in urban United States may be in excess of 50,000 annually.<sup>5</sup>

According to these estimates, the total number of people in the United States in whose families there has been desertion may easily reach a million.

<sup>3</sup> See Mowrer, Ernest R., *Family Disorganization*, 1927, p. 89.

<sup>4</sup> Zunsner, Charles, "Family Desertion: Some International Aspects of the Problem," *Social Service Review*, June, 1932, Vol. VI, pp. 235-55.

<sup>5</sup> Cahen, Alfred, *Statistical Analysis of American Divorce*, footnote to 1. 17. New York: Columbia Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, 1932.

The distribution of the members of these families among racial, religious, and other groupings is virtually unknown. Studies of deserters and their families show that a variety of nationalities, races, and religions are represented among them. Differences in these traits between the husband and wife of the deserted family occur so frequently that they strongly suggest themselves as a cause for desertion. Cultural heterogeneity is characteristic of the city, where most desertions take place. The evidence also seems to indicate that there is great variability in the desertion rate from city to city. As would be expected, *a priori*, there are few desertions in the rural districts. A farmer cannot leave his wife without at the same time leaving the source of his livelihood, and the nature of farming is such that a man can not ordinarily succeed at it without the assistance of a wife. Add to this the fact that the controls of the neighborhood are still strong in the country, and the rarity of desertion among farmers is easily understood.

Class differences in the desertion rate may be inferred from the tendency to refer to desertion as the "poor man's divorce," although the frequency with which deserters return and leave again indicates that they do not always look upon their departures as constituting a final severance of relations with their wives.<sup>6</sup> So easy is it for people of means to secure divorces, desertion being almost everywhere recognized as a valid ground, that almost all deserted wives in the middle and upper income groups will find this road open to them. Divorce in such cases is apt to be chosen as the lesser evil. Instances have been known in which the offended spouse withholds suit for divorce in order to prevent the other from becoming free to marry, but such cases are not numerous enough to be of great importance.

#### CAUSAL FACTORS IN DESERTION

The term "poor man's divorce," applied to desertion, calls attention to the economic aspects of this form of family disorganization.<sup>7</sup> For the man too poor to pay the lawyers' fees

<sup>6</sup> See Colcord, Joanna, *Broken Homes*, 1919, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> See Mowrer, Ernest R., *Family Disorganization*, 1927, p. 89.

and other costs incident to a divorce suit,<sup>8</sup> desertion offers a simple way out. There are no explanations to make, no embarrassing encounters with officers of the law, and if, after an absence, he should find life without his family less pleasant than he had anticipated, a man has the way open for his return. Altogether numerous advantages are seen by the poor man in desertion as a solution for difficult family problems.

The occupational distribution of deserting husbands, as shown by Lillian Brandt's study,<sup>9</sup> bears out the conclusion that the lower economic groups predominate in the ranks of the deserters. Eighty-eight different occupations were found among 493 men. Laborers were the most numerous class, with 88 individuals, and, if we include others engaged in occupations requiring little or no training, the proportion of unskilled in the whole group is about 36 per cent. More than half the total number did not work regularly. The incomes of these men were in accord with their skill and industry. It must not be supposed, however, that poverty is in itself an important cause of desertion. On the contrary, "the rate of desertions has been observed to decrease rather than increase in 'hard times.'"<sup>10</sup>

Inasmuch as desertion is one of the manifestations of family disorganization, the conditions associated with marital disharmony in general are of significance in this connection as well. Miss Colcord<sup>11</sup> notes the following individual factors which may result in desertion: actual mental deficiency, faults in early training, differences in background, wrong basis of marriage, lack of education, occupational faults, wanderlust, money troubles, ill health, physical debility, temperamental incompatibility, sex incompatibility, and vicious habits. Some-

<sup>8</sup> Isabel Drummond (*Getting a Divorce*, 1931, pp. 170-1) has calculated the costs of securing divorces in the largest city of each of the 48 States. According to her figures, the court costs in cases not appealed or contested range from \$3 to \$135, with a modal cost of \$15. Minimum attorney's fees range from \$10 to \$150, with a mode of \$50. Maximum court costs are reported as \$300 and attorney's fees as \$150,000.

<sup>9</sup> *Five Hundred and Seventy-Four Deserters and Their Families*, 1905, pp. 27-8.

<sup>10</sup> Colcord, Joanna, *Broken Homes*, 1919, p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> *Broken Homes*, 1919, pp. 24-49.

times the community supplies an unfavorable environment for the family, an environment which readily may lead to desertion. These contributory factors in the community may be grouped as follows: interference of relatives, racial attitude toward marriage, community standards, lack of proper recreation, influence of companions, and expectation of charitable relief.

Further light on the factors causing desertion is given by Eubank's well-known study of the various types of deserters. He finds<sup>12</sup> that there are five distinct types of deserting husbands: the spurious deserter, the gradual deserter, the intermittent husband, the ill-advised-marriage deserter, and the last-resort deserter. The description of these types supply valuable clues to an understanding of the circumstances leading to desertion. The spurious deserter is of course not a deserter at all; he is simply playing his part in collusion with his wife to secure aid from charitable organizations. He is probably in frequent communication with his family so that he may know how well the ruse is working. The existence of such cases is responsible for much of the difficulty experienced by the genuinely deserted wife in securing aid. The social worker may often withhold assistance under the suspicion that an able-bodied husband is lurking around, possibly even hiding in his own home, while his family is being fed and clothed by the community.

The gradual deserter might also be called the accidental or unintentional deserter. When he leaves his family to work or to seek work in a distant place, he fully expects to return. It is only after repeated or extended absence has weakened his affections and his sense of responsibility that he finally stays away permanently. In many instances he probably never definitely makes up his mind to desert his family; he simply grows into the habit without thinking about it. The intermittent husband type appears in two forms. One of these, the periodic deserter, leaves regularly upon the recurrence of some event such as summer or winter or his wife's confinement.

<sup>12</sup> Eubank, E. E., *A Study of Family Desertion*, 1916, pp. 37-49.

The second form is represented by the husband who runs away when hurt or angry, much in the manner of a small boy. These men, willing enough to share good fortune with their families, lack the stamina to endure the increased burdens of a crisis or the temptations of irresponsibility. The ill-advised-marriage type of deserter appears in consequence of a marriage in which the partners are not suited to each other. Marriages of men and women in the lower economic groups, describable by the terms forced, youthful, or hasty, are likely to furnish more than their share of deserting husbands. The last-resort type of deserter is one who, having exhausted every resource at his command in the effort to make a success of an impossible marriage, finally gives up the attempt and deliberately leaves. His action represents truly the poor man's divorce, since if he had a larger income or a firmer economic stake in the community he would undoubtedly prefer to secure a legal release from marital bondage.

Less positive than individual factors, but significant nonetheless, are certain features of the social life of the modern city, particularly its mobility and the accompanying anonymity. The dissociation of work and home have made the two so nearly independent of each other that they rarely conflict. Many instances are known in which wives were ignorant not only of where their husbands worked, but also of what sort of work they did. A husband may desert his wife and still keep his job when such conditions prevail. His employers will probably never hear of his domestic troubles, nor care greatly if they do. The anonymity which swallows up every individual as soon as he leaves his own doorstep facilitates desertion by enabling the deserter to escape detection without moving more than a few blocks from his old home.

#### THE NONSUPPORTER

Usually the deserter absents himself from the neighborhood or at least from his home. This act, rather than failure to meet his economic obligations, has given him a name. Social workers are, however, familiar with another type of husband,

who, although not actually deserting, precipitates a problem for the members of his family similar to that of the deserter by refusing to contribute to their support. Such individuals are particularly exasperating, since it is difficult to determine that they are not trying to secure employment and since they often appropriate for themselves a portion of the economic aid supplied by the agency for the relief of the wife and children. There are some indications, fortunately, that the number of nonsupporters is gradually decreasing.<sup>13</sup>

#### ILLEGITIMACY

The extent of illegitimacy is usually stated in terms of the illegitimate birth rate, which is the proportion of illegitimate living births to the total living births in a given population for one year. Even if quite accurately calculated, this method gives scarcely any indication of the social importance of the problem. In the first place, the rate is dependent upon the number of legitimate births. Thus, in the case of a rapidly falling general birth rate, a slower decline in illegitimate births would appear in the tabulations as an increasing illegitimate birth rate. Secondly, each illegitimate birth is recorded separately without mention of other illegitimate births in the same family. The number of unmarried mothers is somewhat smaller than the number of their children, even where the illegitimate birth rate is low; where the rate is high, the number of mothers may be much smaller than the number of children. While it is true that each birth means one more individual with difficult adjustments to make, it does not always mean two. This is the case more generally where the illegitimate births are numerous. In the third place, the records do not indicate the extent of legitimation through the marriage of the parents after the birth of their child or children. Many countries now have provisions for legitimation, and unquestionably some illegitimate families are saved to legal standing and social respectability by this procedure. How

<sup>13</sup> Mowrer, Ernest R., "The Trend and Ecology of Family Disorganization," *American Sociological Review*, June, 1938, Vol. III, pp. 344-53.

many, we do not know. We do know, however, that in the United States a large number of marriages, possibly one sixth of the total, are "forced" in the sense that the wife is already pregnant at the time of the marriage.

The illegitimate birth rate of the United States is decidedly low in comparison with the rates of most other countries, if the registration statistics are taken at their face value. According to the records, this country had in 1938 a total of 74,462 illegitimate births, a rate of 41.1 per 1,000 total births. Rates from selected foreign countries are: Belgium (1936), 26.7; Chile (1932), 366; Denmark (1936), 85; England and Wales (1936), 41.1; France (1932), 78; Germany (1935), 78.5; Sweden (1936), 133.<sup>14</sup> The illegitimate birth rate has shown a slight tendency to increase in America during recent years,<sup>15</sup> but this increase is negligible in comparison with the regional differences observed. Nebraska, for example, had in 1938 an illegitimate birth rate of 9.4, while South Carolina had a rate of 110.1. American cities also vary widely in reported rates, as shown by the following (rates for the white population, 1930): New York City, 9.9; Salt Lake City, 10.4; New Orleans, 25.9; and Richmond, Virginia, 41.7.<sup>16</sup> The extraordinarily high rates of certain cities and of the South as a whole is due to the presence of large numbers of Negroes, among whom unmarried parenthood is relatively frequent. Although only one eighth of all the births in the United States are colored, this group contains considerably more than half the illegitimates. Even with a proper allowance for racial distribution, however, conspicuous differences remain, not easily explained. Doubtless a part of the variation results from irregularities in the reporting of births, it being not uncommon practice to falsify the records with respect to the marital status of the child's parents. Studies have revealed numerous instances of illegitimacy, sometimes a substantial proportion of the total, known to social agencies but not found in the official records. On the basis

<sup>14</sup> *Whitaker's Almanack*, 1939, p. 648.

<sup>15</sup> See Reed, Ruth, *The Illegitimate Family in New York City*, 1934, p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> Reed, Ruth, *The Illegitimate Family in New York City*, 1934, p. 18.



of such studies, it appears quite conservative to estimate the total number of illegitimate births in the United States at 100,000 per year.<sup>17</sup>

In the white race a slightly higher rate of illegitimacy is found among the native-born women than among the foreign born. The women of foreign birth, however, show considerable variation among themselves according to nationality, the differences being closely correlated with the proportion of young, unmarried women in each nationality group. Class distinctions are reflected in the higher rates shown in the lower income groups, domestic service being the most frequently noted occupation of the unmarried mothers who are employed.<sup>18</sup> A considerable number of them come to the city from rural areas in order to hide their identity or to secure the services of the special institutions found in the city. This practice tends to raise the observed illegitimacy rate of the city above its rightful level, but even after making due allowance for the migrants from the country, the urban rate remains comparatively high.

The lack of extensive and systematic knowledge of the fathers of illegitimate children prevents our making any positive statements as to their social and economic characteristics. It is safe to assume, however, that they represent about the same nationalities, religions, and income levels as the unmarried mothers. From the fact that some of them could but do not marry the mothers of their children, it might be inferred that they average slightly higher in social status, but this is by no means certain. Illegitimate fathers, on the average, are several years older than unmarried mothers and include some men of relatively advanced age. Possibly this age difference accounts for the fact that about one fourth of them are married, whereas of the mothers almost all are single.

#### CAUSAL FACTORS IN ILLEGITIMACY

The causal factors underlying illegitimacy may be grouped logically into two classes: first, the general social conditions

<sup>17</sup> See "Erasing the Bar Sinister," *Survey*, December, 1935, Vol. LXXI, p. 372.

<sup>18</sup> See Reed, Ruth, *The Illegitimate Family in New York City*, 1934, p. 126.

prevailing which provide a milieu favorable to the appearance of illegitimacy; second, the special factors which are responsible for the individual cases. The general factors are impersonal and impartial, affecting all alike; the special factors are the peculiar combinations of circumstances which, impinging upon the individual, induce in him the behavior involved in illegitimacy. Among the more conspicuous factors of the general class are the marital status and the age and sex distribution of the population. A large number of unmarried women in the childbearing ages presents a condition highly favorable to illegitimacy. The low rate prevailing in the United States may be explained in part on the ground that there is a comparatively small number of such women in the population. The scarcity of single women in most of the foreign-born groups may be responsible for some of the extremely low illegitimacy rates found among them. In Europe, on the other hand, are found large numbers of unmarried women between the ages of fifteen and forty-five, with correspondingly high illegitimacy rates. Since the proportion of unmarried women is highest in the younger age groups, it is only natural that relatively large numbers of young women become unmarried mothers.

The legal regulations affecting betrothals, marriages, and divorces have an important bearing on illegitimacy. If, for example, betrothals are recognized by the mores as equivalent to marriage but are not so recognized by law, a large illegitimate birth rate will appear in the records. Similarly, if the costs of marriage are prohibitive or if qualifications difficult to meet are set up as prerequisites to marriage, irregular unions are certain to be more numerous than otherwise. Here again may be found an explanation of America's low illegitimacy rate, it being notably easy and cheap to become married in this country.

The prevailing attitude toward unmarried parentage unquestionably affects the behavior of all individuals more or less. If a strong disapproval exists, manifested by ostracism, ill treatment, or punishment prescribed by law, illegitimate parenthood is undoubtedly held in check to some extent. The mores

of America have always condemned illegitimacy as one of the worst offenses against society. That this disapproval has not been more effective is due to its application at the wrong point. Obviously the ostracism of children whose parents have not been married to each other can have but little deterrent effect. Few people are sufficiently farsighted or concerned about the welfare of the unborn generation to control their behavior in its interest, and clearly the children themselves can do nothing about it. The failure of modern Western society to exercise more than the mildest disapproval of illegitimate paternity has left untouched one of the possible sources of the whole problem, namely, the sexual desires of men. The custom, until recently widespread, of making no inquiry into illegitimate paternity and holding the father to no responsibility for the care of his child or of its mother has placed a premium upon temporary extramarital unions, an opportunity sure to be taken advantage of by the unscrupulous. If society had always treated illegitimate fathers with the same severity as it has treated illegitimate mothers, the number of children born out of wedlock would undoubtedly have been smaller.

#### INDIVIDUAL FACTORS IN ILLEGITIMACY

So little is known about the fathers of illegitimate children that no adequate analysis of the causes operating to produce their delinquency has been made. Among the mothers, low or deranged mentality appears with such frequency that it must be given serious consideration as the major individual factor. Kammerer<sup>19</sup> found indications of mental abnormality in 167 of his 500 cases. Insufficient intelligence renders the individual incapable of caring for his own best interests in competition with normal individuals. The feeble-minded girl who is physically attractive, but who does not fully realize the consequences of sex relations, yields too readily to the advances of men. She cannot adjust herself to the demands of complex society, because she cannot learn the intricate requirements of the mores nor distinguish the faint line that

<sup>19</sup> Kammerer, Percy, *The Unmarried Mother*, 1920, p. 320.

marks right from wrong. If, as is often the case, her parents are also low in intelligence, the daughter's chances of becoming an unmarried mother are greatly increased as a result of the lax supervision exercised over her behavior. Mental disease is also a factor in illegitimacy. We are warned, however, against assuming that the correlation between mental abnormality and illegitimacy shows the latter to be a result of the former, at least to the extent that illegitimacy is identified with delinquency.<sup>20</sup> It is, indeed, quite possible that sex irregularities among normal women may be more common than among the feeble-minded, and that the lower illegitimacy rate shown by normal women results from better knowledge of contraceptives, resort to abortion, and more successful concealment of births.

#### AGE FACTORS

Probably because the proportion of single persons is high among them, and because poor training and mental abnormalities show their effects early in life, the parents of illegitimate children are usually young. A. Madorah Donahue states:

Illegitimacy is a problem of youth. The great majority of the mothers of children born out of wedlock are under twenty-five years of age and almost half of them are under twenty-one years. While the age groups for the fathers of such children fall somewhat higher, these fathers are, in the main, young men.<sup>21</sup>

Reed's investigation showed that of the unmarried mothers in New York City in 1930, 42 per cent were under twenty years of age and 82 per cent were under twenty-five.<sup>22</sup> Colored unmarried mothers are somewhat younger than the average.

#### OCCUPATION

Correlations have been observed between illegitimacy and certain low-paid, relatively unskilled occupations, such as house-

<sup>20</sup> See Schumacher, Henry C., "The Unmarried Mother: A Sociopsychiatric View-point," *Mental Hygiene*, October, 1927, Vol. XI, pp. 775-82.

<sup>21</sup> Donahue, A. Madorah, "Children Born out of Wedlock," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, September, 1930, Vol. CLI, pp. 162-72. Reprinted by permission of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.

<sup>22</sup> Reed, Ruth, *The Illegitimate Family in New York City*, 1934, p. 115.

work and factory labor.<sup>23</sup> The conclusion, based on these correlations, that servants are necessarily exposed to great moral hazards is hardly justified. It is quite as reasonable to suppose that the social background which is the common heritage of the lower economic stratum is the important factor, rather than the occupational status of the individual.

### SOCIAL FACTORS

In addition to those mentioned above, other factors are recognized, mostly of a social character, which operate as causes or conditions of illegitimacy. Kammerer finds "bad home conditions" the most frequently recurring cause.<sup>24</sup> Mangold mentions as social factors the following: lack of home training, overcrowding, unwholesome recreation, drunkenness, sexual suggestibility, lack of religious training, and the demoralization of war.<sup>25</sup>

American studies reveal the fact that a very large number of unmarried mothers come from homes where family relations are not normal but where desertion, divorce, step-parenthood, or the widowhood of the parents produced undesirable home relations for the girls.<sup>26</sup>

It may be logically argued that some of these factors, as, for example, bad environment, bad companions, and lack of home training and wholesome recreation, are more properly to be regarded as effects than as causes—concomitants of unmarried motherhood rather than its antecedents. However, analyses of this kind enable us to understand and appreciate sympathetically the social situation in which the individuals under consideration have to live. An explanation in terms of thwarted wishes or wrongly conditioned responses may lose some of its value because of its abstraction.

<sup>23</sup> Mangold, George B., *Children Born out of Wedlock*, 1921, p. 65.

<sup>24</sup> Kammerer, Percy G., *The Unmarried Mother*, 1920, p. 320.

<sup>25</sup> Mangold, George B., *op. cit.*, p. 47.

<sup>26</sup> Reed, Ruth, *Negro Illegitimacy in New York City*, p. 41. New York: Columbia Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, 1926.

## SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF DESERTION AND ILLEGITIMACY

The effects of desertion and illegitimacy upon the individuals involved are sufficiently similar to justify their being dealt with together. Such significant differences as exist may be pointed out incidentally. The first and most conspicuous effect is the economic maladjustment of the mother and her children. The requirements of physical existence can be met only by maintaining the status of an income receiver in our economic system. For the vast majority whose limited ownership of capital does not allow them to live on interest or rent, this means that they must have jobs for which they receive wages or salaries. Not all individuals, however, are expected to secure their living through payments for their services. Children and, in most cases, the wife share the income of the father and husband and do not themselves hold jobs. This arrangement necessitates the active assistance and co-operation of the father and husband to guarantee the living of the dependent members of the family. His absence, coupled with failure to provide for his wife and children, is likely soon to precipitate an economic crisis for them. It is this crisis which brings particular cases of desertion and illegitimacy to the attention of social agencies. Sometimes the mother is able to assume the rôle of breadwinner in addition to that of homemaker, but often she fails. The prejudices of employers, her own inexperience, and her household duties combine to force her finally to appeal to society for help. It is probable that many deserted families, legitimate and illegitimate, which do not appeal to charity for aid nevertheless suffer grievously from lack of the necessities of life or from being forced to lower their standards of living.

The responsibilities shirked by the fathers must be met by someone, and, when the mother is unable to bear the burden, it falls upon the community. A study in Cleveland showed that in 1929 the city paid \$18,000 for six months' relief of 533 deserted families. The maintenance of the deserted children of

New York City costs a million dollars a year.<sup>27</sup> If these figures are applied to the country at large, it will be seen that the total expense incurred amounts to many millions.

A high infant mortality rate is noted as one of the undesirable consequences of the unsanctioned union. The child born out of wedlock has from two to three times as many chances of death during the first year of life as the child of legally married parents.<sup>28</sup> The maternal mortality of unmarried women is more than twice as high as that of married women.<sup>29</sup> The hardships endured by the children and mothers who survive are not indicated in the tabulations, but there is every reason to believe that the conditions which are so severe as to cause twice the normal number of deaths result in extraordinary suffering of the survivors as well. There are no statistics showing the infant mortality of the children of deserted mothers who are married, but the fact that many of these mothers become destitute and the further fact that infant mortality is exceptionally high among the poor lead inevitably to the conclusion that deserted families have more than their share of infant deaths.

#### EFFECT UPON PERSONALITY

The most serious result of desertion and illegitimacy is the damage done to the personalities of the members of the family left by one of the parents to shift for themselves. These individuals find their happiness opposed by the difficulties of adjustment, not only in the economic but also in the social world. Deep-rooted attitudes of hostility to families not in conformity with the accepted pattern rise up to suppress the kindness generated by their misfortunes. Disapproval is expressed, unconsciously but unmistakably, by the very persons who minister to the urgent needs of these unfortunates. The

<sup>27</sup> Zunser, Charles, "Family Desertion: Some International Aspects of the Problem," *Social Service Review*, June, 1932, Vol. VI, pp. 235-55.

<sup>28</sup> Lundberg, Emma C., and Lenroot, Katharine F., *Illegitimacy as a Child Welfare Problem*, United States Children's Bureau Publication No. 66, 1920, p. 28.

<sup>29</sup> United States Children's Bureau, *Maternal Mortality in Fifteen States*, Bureau Publication No. 223, 1934.

steps taken by the rescue homes, for example, to help the unmarried mother to hide her shame so far as possible from public knowledge is only one of the ways in which the erring girl is made to feel the enormity of her sin. Ostracism, sometimes even by her own relatives, is the penalty she must pay. Not only she must suffer, but her children also, innocent though they obviously are. In some instances, the unmarried mother is blackmailed or exploited by persons who take advantage of her ignorance or her fears to make money for themselves.

The deserted family is somewhat less unfortunate than the illegitimate. The disgrace of being deserted after a proper wedding ceremony is not quite so great as being deserted before it, but except for the difference in degree the result is the same. The children of a deserting father feel ashamed of their condition.

The net effect of the unfavorable attitudes directed toward the deserted and the illegitimate is a lowering of their status in the group. This means a denial of the opportunity to achieve social approval in fair competition with other persons normally of the same class. The individual who is reared as a child of unmarried parents bears a stigma which no effort on his part can ever erase. He may, of course, repudiate his parents and claim others, imaginary but respectable, a method which, no matter how successful, forever keeps him in dread of discovery. To no friend can he tell the secret with certainty that the relationship built up without taking account of this one thing will weather the blow of the telling. The standing he attains, however advanced, is a structure built upon the sands of deception. He can never enjoy to the fullest a friendship or a love, for to be entirely satisfying affection must be given him for what he knows himself to be rather than for what others have been tricked into believing. If the responsible parent or well-meaning guardian has hidden from him the essential facts about his parentage, he may note inconsistencies in the accounts given him and suffer, as many children do, from doubts and fears as to his origin.

A disproportionately large number of children who are left



without proper sponsorship in life through the desertion of one or both parents harbor deep resentment against society. They recognize, if but vaguely, that society, by perpetuating prejudices against them, prevents them from receiving recognition for their achievements. Some of them may consequently ally themselves with the criminal class, against the society which will not admit them to full membership. Among the criminals they are at any rate tolerated, or even welcome. To this group they can be friendly, and, since their opportunities for a return to normal, law-abiding society are slight, they may remain loyal to this group for life. Naturally, the problem they present to the agencies of law enforcement is extremely difficult.

More often, these outcasts develop feelings of inferiority against which they make only weak resistance. Overcome by the certainty of failure, they go through life never giving the full measure of their effort. They excuse their deficiencies by rationalizations as fundamentally unsatisfactory to themselves as to others. They take refuge from the world among low companions, whose lack of discrimination makes them unprejudiced; or they seek the solace of drink; or they become recluses, avoiding all contact with men. Whatever the adjustment they make, it remains unsatisfying. Misery and unhappiness are the lot of these unadjusted persons, upon whom has descended the wrath of society because of the sins of their fathers.

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## WIDOWHOOD AND CHILD DEPENDENCY

IN practically every form of social and economic failure, some blame is attached to the victims. The jobless are considered shiftless or improvident; the delinquent are regarded as morally depraved; the diseased are presumed to be suffering a just penalty for their sins. A conspicuous exception is made in the case of those whose difficulties are the immediate result of the death of a spouse or parent. The widowed and the fatherless have so long held their place as worthy recipients of charity that the mere mention of them starts a copious flow of sympathy. They are the unfortunates whose sad plight makes the most effective appeal to prospective donors of funds for community chests; they are the groups most frequently mentioned in debates on welfare legislation. The reason for this state of the public mind is not at once apparent. Perhaps it is a remnant of a feeling of group responsibility, persisting anomalously in a society far gone toward individualism. Or it may be that the death of the breadwinner is so obviously the immediate cause of the difficulties of widows and orphans that they are therefore absolved of liability for their condition. There seems to be a definite tendency for us to overlook guilt in persons for whom we feel sorry. Less probable is the explanation that the problems of widows and orphans are clearly recognized in their true nature due to the suddenness with which they appear.

At any rate, these are favored groups, often selected for special attention by persons who disapprove of charity in general. By giving liberally to widows and orphans specifically, such persons can administer rebuke to those modern agencies which insist upon helping all people in need regardless of their morals. It should not be supposed, however, that the

accepted guiltlessness of widows and orphans has contributed greatly to a solution of their difficulties. The flood of sympathy which overwhelms them at the funeral soon dries up. At best, it provides only for immediate economic needs, leaving the serious business of making a living and of finding new social adjustments for the widow and her children to handle as best they can.

#### STATUS OF WIDOWS

If, in meeting its difficulties, the bereaved family profits but little from sentimental sympathy, the same cannot be said of the status its members continue to enjoy even long after the death of the husband and father. The widow and the orphaned children suffer not the slightest loss of social standing in the community. The significance of this fact is best realized by comparing them with the family which is broken by desertion and whose difficulties are complicated by the attitudes of disapproval which must be faced and overcome.

In certain other societies, widows are not so fortunate in this respect as in ours. Until recent times the widow in India was expected to commit suicide by leaping into the pyre which consumed the body of her husband. Denied the right to remarry in a society which offered no economic or social opportunities to women outside the family, the widow might well choose suicide of her own free will as the only alternative to starvation. Remarriage among Chinese widows is said to be discouraged, with resultant hardship for all women whose husbands die while their wives are young. Similar disabilities have attached to the state of widowhood among other peoples.<sup>1</sup>

#### AID TO WIDOWS AND ORPHANS IN THE PAST

The compassion with which the fate of widows and orphans has been viewed in the past was never sufficient to motivate adequate relief. The social side of the problem was scarcely noticed at all. The relief offered was generally limited to the

<sup>1</sup> Sumner, William G., *Folkways*, 1906, pp. 387-93.

supplying of physical necessities, and the amounts of these were kept down to the minimum requirements of existence. For many generations, the almshouse was the only institution dispensing these necessities, and residence there was prerequisite to the right of assistance. The introduction of orphanages, following the rise of objections to maintaining children in the foul moral atmosphere of the almshouse, saved the children from contact with older paupers, but added little to cheer their lives. Apparently the regime of orphanage existence commended itself to boards of overseers of charitable organizations, since it made possible the demonstration of the success of the project through the children themselves. Militaristic managers kept order and precision approaching perfection, and hymns of gratitude sung by the children on visiting days convinced the benefactors that all was well.

#### EXTENT OF WIDOWHOOD AND ORPHANHOOD

The number of widowed persons in the United States, according to the census of 1930, was about six and three quarters millions. Of these, four and three quarters millions were women and two millions were men. The percentage of widows in the population of females over the age of fifteen years in 1930 was 11.1; the percentage of widowers in the population of males over the age of fifteen was 4.6. The difference in the prevalence of widowhood in the two sexes is due primarily to the fact that husbands are older than their wives and therefore in the natural course of events die earlier. Other reasons include the greater occupational hazards encountered by men and the greater longevity of women in the higher age groups.

Compared with the total number of dependent children, the number of full orphans—that is, children who have lost both parents by death—is unexpectedly small. Often less than ten per cent of the inmates of “orphans’ homes” are actually orphans. Of the quarter million children in institutions in the United States at the end of 1933, less than 22,000 were known to be orphans. In addition to those cared for in institutions there are, to be sure, many orphans and half-orphans among those

who receive aid through pensions given to the remaining parent or to the relative who maintains a home for the child. Some of these are the offspring of unmarried or deserting parents, but the majority are undoubtedly in the group here under consideration. Finally, an undetermined number of orphans have found places in established families as foster children. Since they do not present economic problems, they do not appear in statistical enumerations; consequently we do not know how many are in this group. It is apparent, however, that many persons have faced maladjustments as a result of bereavement, and that, as viewed merely from the standpoint of numbers, this is one of the most serious of our social problems.

### THE CAUSES

The causes of the conditions of widowhood and orphanhood are simply the causes of death prevailing among married adults, particularly in those age groups during which, as parents, they are most likely to have small children. As might be expected, preventable accidents and diseases account for a large proportion of the deaths in these groups. (See Chapters 21 and 23.) Unusual events, such as disasters and wars, sometimes deprive many homes of husbands and fathers in a short time. Practically all women who die from the diseases of childbirth leave husbands or children or both. Since the death rate from this cause is inordinately high in the United States as compared with other civilized countries, it follows that many children in this country are unnecessarily deprived of their mothers.

### THE VICTIMS

Since death comes to all classes, widows and orphans are found in every stratum of society. No parent can be certain that he will survive to bring up his children to maturity. Yet there is a difference in the risk, correlated with economic status. Economic security frees those who possess it from much anxiety; it enables them to take precautions for their health and treat-

ment for their illnesses; it enables them to engage in the less hazardous employments; it saves them from overexertion with its attendant susceptibility to disease. A number of preventable deaths among the well-to-do are thus postponed, deaths which among the poor are more likely to come while the parents are young and the children dependent. Widowhood and orphanhood fall with greatest frequency upon the lower economic classes for the same reasons that these classes suffer from greater mortality in general. Except for the relationship to income, widowhood and orphanhood are practically independent of social characteristics. They are relatively unaffected by custom, law, religion, or fashion.

#### THE PROBLEMS

Widows and orphans are grouped together because of the similarity of the prevailing attitudes toward them and because of the similarity of their social difficulties, which distinguish them sharply from the victims of desertion and illegitimacy. Economically, their problem is the same as that of any family which has lost its breadwinner, from whatever cause. In the past, practically all our efforts to alleviate their condition have consisted of contributions of goods or money designed to make up the loss of income due to the death of the husband and father. When no economic aid is necessary, as in the case of widows possessing property or income or in the case of widowers whose earning capacity is not diminished by the death of the wife, it has not been the practice of society to give any assistance at all. It may be admitted that in some respects, at least, the problems of widows and orphans are less serious than those met with in divorce, desertion, and illegitimacy. This is due to the fact that the widow and the orphan do not lose status directly in consequence of their misfortunes. They are not ostracized or made to feel ashamed of their condition. As a result they are spared many of the difficulties of readjustment and are more likely to succeed in re-establishing themselves satisfactorily.

Indirectly, however, these groups suffer from considerable

lowering of status. The loss of income necessitates a sharply reduced standard of living, perhaps followed by an appeal to charity. In our society it is practically impossible to maintain social standing independently of economic standing. Failure to keep up the latter nearly always results in a fall of the former. Widows and orphans may ultimately suffer loss of status because of their inability to maintain their accustomed standard of living, and many of them make unsatisfactory adjustments as a result. Unquestionably, the loss of self-respect so engendered, as well as the necessity for taking in lodgers and boarders, is responsible in part for the rather frequent occurrence of illegitimacy among widows.<sup>2</sup> The same loss of self-respect under somewhat different circumstances may lead to an acceptance of the status of pauperism or even a desire to remain in it.

The low income of the widow subjects her children to the antisocial influence of low-rent areas and the moral risks of early employment. It denies them the opportunity to advance by curtailing their formal education and excluding them from vocational training. Although boys rather infrequently follow the occupations of their fathers in present-day America, there are in total many who do, and even when they do not, they are often aided by their fathers in finding places in the economic organization from which they may secure incomes. The lack of a father constitutes an economic handicap not easy to overcome. These difficulties, added to the social problem of a broken home, make the way of the fatherless child a hard road to travel. Many such children find themselves unable to secure a satisfactory place in society by the accepted procedures.

In bringing up children, the problems of the widower are in some respects greater than those of the widow. He can usually avoid economic hardships, but he cannot ordinarily maintain a desirable home. His long absences from the home and the inadequacy of hired assistants as substitutes for the mother deprive the children of proper training and control. Children of widowers, therefore, have an extraordinarily hard

<sup>2</sup> Watson, Amey Eaton, *Illegitimacy*, 1923, p. 56.



time in meeting the demands of life in their respective communities.

#### THE PROBLEM OF BEREAVEMENT

Probably the most serious problem faced by the family which loses a member by death is that of personal readjustment. Although practically all persons at some time in their lives are called upon to adjust to the death of a beloved person, this problem has received comparatively little attention. A few sociologists have recognized the need for investigation in this field and have made a beginning.<sup>3</sup> Much more should be done before the field can be considered to have been thoroughly explored.

It is generally accepted by social psychologists that the human personality develops in the process of interaction with other personalities. Individuals brought up in isolation would have no personality whatsoever. It is also generally accepted that the human personality, no matter how fully developed, deteriorates and even completely disintegrates in isolation. Experience with solitary confinement supplies ample proof on this point. Personality may, in fact, be thought of as itself a process, beginning only when two or more persons are in social interaction with each other and continuing only so long as the interaction continues.

Bereavement in a family interrupts in greater or less degree the interaction upon which the personalities of the survivors have long depended. If the deceased person played an important rôle, that is, if the personalities of the other members of the family leaned heavily upon him for their support, the maladjustment will be correspondingly severe. Bereavement means, in effect, a diminution of the personalities of the remaining members of all the groups to which the deceased persons belonged. On the subjective side, this diminution is felt as a sense of loss or of emptiness, as if a part of the survivor himself had been interred with the deceased. The customary give and

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Eliot, Thomas D., "The Bereaved Family," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March, 1932, Vol. CLX, pp. 184-90.

take of social interaction in daily living is lacking; even the objectionable features of the personality of the departed individual are missed and longed for. The emotion of grief under such circumstances may be absolutely overwhelming, the most intense form of human suffering known.

The manner in which the limited family of the present day contributes to the seriousness of this problem should not be overlooked. The exclusion from the family circle of all but the parents and their children has placed the heavy burden of maintaining personal relationships upon a very small group. The result has been an intensification of the feelings which unite the members of the family, so that each becomes of extreme importance to the others. It may be argued that the parents of twelve children love each of them as much as the parents of two love each of theirs, but it is certainly a fact of common sense that the death of one of the twelve will usually cause less grief in the family than the death of one of the two. Similarly, the death of a parent in a family where there are numerous adults, such as aunts, uncles, or grandparents, is less severely felt than in a family where the deceased leaves only one adult to shoulder the burden. In view of the intense suffering of grief and of the great damage often done to personalities as a result, the wisdom of substituting the small family for its larger predecessor may well be doubted.

This point is emphasized every time the death of a parent breaks up a home. In the large family of the past such an event was comparatively rare; now it is fairly common. As a consequence, the children, whose limited contacts make their personalities even more dependent upon the immediate members of the family than are the personalities of adults, are separated from the environment of familiar persons and set down among strangers. If the strangers are good foster parents, the child's personality may be rebuilt on the basis of new relationships. The younger he is, the less he will have to lose and the easier it will be for him to become readjusted. However, if he is two or three years old or more, it is doubtful if he can so completely overcome his past that his personality will

be entirely free from the effects of his loss. If he is so unfortunate as to be brought up in an institution where the multifarious duties of the attendants and their attitudes toward their charges prevent the establishing of close personal relations with the individual, he may never develop a normal personality at all. Starved for attention, he may seek it through socially disapproved behavior, thereby isolating himself still further from those persons who might otherwise ultimately provide him with an environment of satisfying personal relationships.

### ADJUSTMENT

Most people make some sort of personal adjustment to bereavement which enables them to carry on. Following a period of helplessness, there is a gradual re-establishment of personal contacts, often taking in new persons, and finally reaching a state of full and complete functioning again. For many, however, the readjustment is accomplished only after a long struggle, and others never achieve it. There are persons who can never face the fact that the deceased person has gone, and who therefore go through life acting as if he were still present. In imagination they see him; in their dreams they converse with him. To maintain such an illusion is a strain upon the individual who attempts it, and even its success is unsatisfactory because it is so contrary to reality as seen by others.

Religion has served many as a means of readjustment to bereavement. To the religious individual, the death of the loved one is looked upon as caused by the act of an omnipotent and omniscient God, whose ways are best even though beyond human comprehension. The apparent finality of death is counteracted by the concept of immortality, whereby the grave becomes only a temporary resting place, from which the soul, with personality intact, will go to begin life in the Hereafter, where all who were joined on earth will be joined anew, never to be separated again. As long as it is generally accepted, religion offers one of the best possible means of meeting loss by death. If, however, as seems to be the case in modern America, faith in religion wanes, so that to large portions of

the community it is no longer significant, then not only for the faithless but also for the faithful religion loses some of its efficacy. A man alone in his beliefs can maintain them only by shutting out the world, an action which is itself a form of maladjustment.

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## DYSGENIC MARRIAGES

HOWEVER true it may be that the highest reaches of human happiness are attained only through marriage, it has long been recognized that some marriages take place which prove injurious to the principals, to their children, and to society at large. The prevention of all such marriages would be desirable, and, if it were possible to predict the outcome of every matrimonial venture, some practical method of eliminating the failures before they begin might be devised. For the great majority of marriages, the failures cannot be prevented, because they cannot be foretold. Sometimes unions contracted under what appear to be the most favorable circumstances end in the divorce court; at other times the most unpromising marriage turns out well enough. But there are in the population certain groups for which the social undesirability of marriage can be fairly well predicted. These groups include (1) the very young and (2) the mentally deficient whose defects are of hereditary character.

### CHILD MARRIAGES

Our knowledge of child marriages has come for the most part from a study<sup>1</sup> made by Mary E. Richmond and Fred S. Hall under the auspices of the Russell Sage Foundation. The study proper is prefaced by an attempt to determine what age may be regarded as an acceptable minimum for marriage in the United States. Two classes of factors are considered in this determination, the biological and the social. As to the first of these factors it may be stated as obvious that the injuriousness of sex relations before puberty makes marriage at very early ages quite undesirable. There remains, moreover,

<sup>1</sup> *Child Marriages*, 1925.

a degree of physical immaturity in the individual even after the establishment of the sexual functions, so that the ideal minimum, considered biologically, could not wisely be placed at puberty, but rather several years later.

Consideration of social factors leads to a similar conclusion. Children and other very young persons are not so well qualified to choose satisfactory mates or to assume the economic responsibilities of married life as are adults. On the basis of these facts, Richmond and Hall regard as potentially harmful all marriages of boys at the age of 17 or under and of girls at the age of 15 or under, terming them "child marriages." They also regard as questionable the marriages of boys aged 18 or 19 and of girls aged 16 or 17. These unions are referred to as "youthful marriages."<sup>2</sup>

#### THE EXTENT OF YOUTHFUL AND CHILD MARRIAGE

In some parts of the world, child marriage, especially of girls, has long been the general practice. In India, marriage contracts have been made by parents for infants not yet old enough to have the least understanding of the proceedings, and the marriage of girls below the age of puberty has been the established rule. Warm climates induce early marriage. Thus in Europe the southern countries have larger proportionate numbers of very young brides than do the northern countries. A similar difference is observable between the colder and warmer regions of the United States.<sup>3</sup>

The actual number of child marriages and youthful marriages in this country is difficult to determine, owing to the fact that many of them, if not the majority, are contracted in violation of law. False statements as to age are frequently made by applicants for marriage licenses, and where, as is usually the case, no attempt is made to verify these statements, they go into the records as facts. No subsequent compilation of records reveals their falsity. The extent to which falsification may appear is indicated by the following:

<sup>2</sup> Richmond, Mary E., and Hall, Fred S., *Child Marriages*, 1925, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 36.

In the Cleveland study of school-girl brides already quoted there were found to have been during the months covered 505 marriage licenses issued to girls who were actually between the ages of 14 and 18 years inclusive. . . . Of 148 girls who claimed to be 18, for example, 6 were 14; 16 were 15; 41 were 16; 85 were 17.<sup>4</sup>

That a considerable proportion of the young girls who marry do so while very young is indicated by an investigation of 60 child marriages reported by Richmond and Hall.<sup>5</sup> They found the following distribution of cases, according to age at marriage:

NUMBER OF CASES	AGE AT MARRIAGE
4 .....	11
3 .....	12
14 .....	13
17 .....	14
22 .....	15

For the reasons suggested, we have no accurate knowledge of the number of married children in the United States. Regarding the general prevalence of child marriage, Richmond and Hall write:

. . . we estimate that approximately 343,000 women and girls who are living in the United States today began their married lives as child brides within the last 36 years. This estimate does not include a good many still living who married prior to 1890.<sup>6</sup>

#### THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD MARRIAGE

Far from being the idyllic love matches imagined by romantic adults, child marriages frequently turn out to be tragic mistakes with irreparable consequences. The lack of experience in children makes it impossible for them to take the precautions necessary to assure the selection of a good life mate. Marriage is more than an arrangement for legalizing sex relations; it has important economic and social aspects as well. The inability of the child to select a partner with the required minima of de-

<sup>4</sup> Richmond, Mary E., and Hall, Fred S., *Marriage and the State*, p. 144. New York: The Russell Sage Foundation, 1929.

<sup>5</sup> *Marriage and the State*, 1929, p. 129.

<sup>6</sup> Richmond, Mary E., and Hall, Fred S., *Child Marriages*, p. 57. New York: The Russell Sage Foundation, 1925.

sirable qualities determines in advance the failure of child marriages. When, as occurs in a number of cases, the marriages of children are arranged by the parents, the prospects for success are but little better. Parents in our society who have so little regard for the welfare of their children as to attempt to secure their marriage at an early age are not likely to be much concerned about choosing good husbands and wives for them. Child marriage tends to assume, therefore, the character of exploitation in which the parents or other older persons take unfair advantages of the child's helplessness.

A California judge reports the marriage of a child of 12 to a man of 39. A license was refused, but the girl's parents accompanied her across the border into Mexico, where they were successful in obtaining the necessary sanction to effect the marriage. The judge reporting this case had issued a separation order, had made the child a ward of the court, and had directed that annulment proceedings be brought. Before this last was done, however, the husband in the case was sent to prison for criminally assaulting another child.<sup>7</sup>

In cases where the designs of the older persons involved in the marriage are not actually inimical to the child's interests, his immaturity may handicap him so seriously as to prevent the success of his marriage. Very early motherhood may result in ill health, not only for the mother but for the children as well. Young boys are not ordinarily qualified to make a living for a family. From lack of training, they must accept unskilled work with its lifelong handicap of low wages. Youthful parents, moreover, find it difficult to give their children the kind of home environment necessary to socialize them properly.

#### MENTAL DEFECTIVES AND MARRIAGE

A comparatively small proportion of the population, constituting in the aggregate a considerable number, has inherited mental defect of so serious a nature as to prevent the afflicted individuals from maintaining themselves in society as adults

<sup>7</sup> Richmond, Mary E., and Hall, Fred S., *Child Marriages*, p. 95. New York: The Russell Sage Foundation, 1925.



without assistance. Many of these defectives, though lacking the capacity to establish a home and provide for a family, have unimpaired reproductive abilities and sexual inclinations. The considerations of prudence found in the normal person do not influence their actions. Given the opportunity, such persons marry or form sexual unions outside of marriage more or less according to the family pattern at an early age. Since they cannot adequately provide for their own living, much less for that of their children, it is clear that the families established by these defectives are socially undesirable. No family can be regarded as desirable which cannot in normal social and economic surroundings provide its children with the necessities of life and a fairly well-adjusted personality.

Unfortunately, the children of parents with mental defect are not capable of becoming normal persons even in the most favorable environment. They are subjected to a double handicap, namely, the inadequacies of their parents which prevent the establishment and maintenance of a home in accordance with the accepted standards, and their own inadequacies which prevent the acquisition of the more desirable personality traits. The inherited and acquired defects thus tend to re-enforce each other. A circle of causation is formed from which there is no escape. The continuous interaction of unsocial environment and defective heredity is effectively demonstrated by the numerous histories which have been written of degenerate families.

#### NUMBER OF MARRIAGEABLE DEFECTIVES

The actual number of persons of this class found in the population can only be estimated. The worst cases of mental defect are seldom involved, partly because they are recognized early in life and segregated in institutions, and partly because many of them are neither sexually aggressive nor attractive. The group involved consists of the borderline cases, individuals who are not clearly in need of institutional care and who, on the other hand, are not capable of independent existence except in the most sheltered situations. Since these persons are more nearly normal than those requiring institutional care, it may

be inferred that they are more numerous. E. M. East suggests that the total may be about 1,000,000.<sup>8</sup>

#### THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE MARRIAGE OF DEFECTIVES

The marriage rate among the men in this group is probably somewhat lower than that of normal men, since normal women are averse to marrying feeble-minded husbands. Feeble-minded women, however, appear not to be much discriminated against as wives; and those who do not marry often bear illegitimate children. The result is a comparatively high birth rate for the group as a whole. If left to themselves, their numbers would tend to diminish because of the incompetence of the parents in the care of their children. But modern society does not permit the ruthless action of natural selection. Our care enables children who would otherwise have died from neglect to grow up and have children of their own, children who must in turn be cared for by social agencies. With a fairly high birth rate, our social policy may make it possible for the defectives to increase faster than the normal population. Whether this has taken place or not is difficult to say, though it is easily demonstrable that the proportion of mental defectives recognized as such in our population has shown no disposition to decrease.

The cost of providing for the great army of defectives becomes greater instead of less. In addition to the food and shelter supplied to those who are too feeble-minded to secure these for themselves, a large part of the mounting cost of crime is chargeable to this group. Ultimately the efficiency of our society as a whole may be seriously impaired through the heavy burden imposed upon us by the incompetents.

Humanitarian considerations may justify our giving the best possible care to mental defectives. The preservation of human life may be necessary for the conservation of wholesome respect for life in other situations, but the institution of marriage will scarcely rise in our estimation because of the indiscriminate availability of its privileges to all kinds of people. On the

<sup>8</sup> East, E. M., *Heredity and Human Affairs*, 1927, p. 236.

contrary, the example of the many failures of marriage among mental defectives may actually lessen our respect and regard for marriage to the point where it will lose its power as a means of social control.

Occasionally, well-meaning people argue that the right to reproduce is an inalienable right of all human beings conferred upon them by divine action and that to forbid marriage to the feeble-minded is therefore contrary to the will of God. Such a view is founded upon a misconception of the nature of society. Although it is true that society exists for the individual and is justifiably continued only so long as it contributes to the welfare of its members, nonetheless it has always been expected of individuals that they make whatever sacrifices may be necessary for social welfare. If we do not hesitate to require individuals to give up their lives in the cause of nationalism, which is but one part of society extending itself at the expense of another, why should we not require certain individuals to forego marriage in order that the race as a whole may be improved? This alone would appear to be sufficient reason, but there is the further fact that through a decrease in the number of defectives in our society human misery may be in some degree lessened and a higher standard of living attained for all.

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## PROBLEMS OF THE UNMARRIED

**A**MONG primitive people unmarried adults are rare. Marriage is a duty enjoined upon every member of the group. Nearly always, it takes place at puberty or within a few years thereafter. Among peoples whose normal sex ratio has been disturbed by female infanticide or war, appropriate forms of polygamy are sometimes adopted as a means of avoiding celibacy on part of the members of the more numerous sex.

With the development of civilization, the interval between puberty and marriage has shown a tendency to increase. The average age at marriage for both sexes in the United States is more than ten years beyond the age of puberty. Many persons marry much later than the average, and considerable numbers never marry at all. If we conservatively accept as of marriageable age all women of 20 or over and all men of 25 or over, we find over 6,000,000 unmarried women and 8,000,000 unmarried men. Probably all but about seven per cent of the persons in these groups who survive to the age of 65 ultimately marry, but not before spending more or less time, frequently many years, in celibacy after attaining a proper age for marriage.

## FACTORS IN DELAYED MARRIAGE—ECONOMIC

In a society which holds marriage in such high repute as does ours, this state of affairs is clearly indicative of something wrong. If, as we are all agreed, marriage is a desirable way of life, why do 14,000,000 men and women hesitate to undertake it? Evidently marriage has serious disadvantages, some of which serve to deter potential candidates from matrimony.

First and by far the most significant of the deterring factors are those connected with income and expenditure. To realize why this is true, we have only to recall that the family is the

most important status-conferring and status-maintaining group in our society and that status is closely correlated with expenditure. Add to this the fact that practically all but the most unintelligent members of our society desire to keep or secure high social standing, and it is easy to understand why many persons defer marriage. Except to the very few who inherit wealth, the attainment of a large income immediately upon reaching the marriageable age is an impossibility. Employments which yield large incomes are not to be had without years of expensive training, often followed by still more years of waiting for promotions governed by rules of seniority. The professional man usually has to work a decade or more for the development of a clientele; the business man may have to struggle still longer before he can make substantial profits. Long apprenticeships and extended periods of work for little pay must elapse before marriage can be thought of.

During this prolonged celibacy, the young man finds it possible by frugal habits to maintain his social position fairly well. Even his limited income will suffice as long as he has no dependents. But he sees his married friends go down to defeat in the struggle to keep families up to his standard on incomes no larger than his own. Unless he can persuade himself that the advantages of marriage outweigh the loss in status which must inevitably accompany it, he will choose to remain single until his income becomes large enough to leave an appreciable surplus over his own expenses. By that time he may be too old to marry or so accustomed to the life of a bachelor that he cannot make the adjustments required in marriage.

The difficulties of the young woman are even greater than those of the young man, since her fortune in life is dependent upon his. Both she and her parents anticipate for her a good marriage, that is to say, marriage with a man of high social standing, and all her training is planned with this end in view. Insofar as the family circumstances will permit, she is educated to the life of a lady. If poverty or a realization of the difficulties of attaining the ideal forces her to earn a living, she goes to work half-heartedly, assuming that her occupation is but a

stopgap, a necessary evil intruding to trouble her impatient wait for a suitor.

The suitor unfortunately is often long in coming. The young man who calls is reluctant to assume the rôle. He finds the girl unwilling to accept the kind of entertainment really within the range of his purse and concludes, rightly enough, that he can never hope to give her the kind of home her expectations demand. If, moved by enthusiastic affection to cast discretion to the winds, he should venture to speak of marriage, the girl would hardly dare encourage him even if she felt so inclined. She would not be making the good match her mother had planned for her; she would have to do work which she had been taught to regard as socially degrading.

If she is so fortunate as to have a well-paid occupation, her economic independence may prevent her marriage. She is then in the position of the young man, who can maintain his standing alone, but not under the handicap of a family. For it is usually expected of a woman who marries that she give up her work to make a home for her husband. Only if she is engaged in one of the higher paid, artistic professions can she continue in it after marriage without some loss of status. In recent years, many employers have adopted the policy of refusing to employ married women, especially when their husbands are working, a policy which has been extended in some places even to certain professions, such as teaching. Under these conditions, an employed woman has no choice as to whether or not she will remain at work after marriage. There are, of course, many exceptions to the attitude toward marriage here presented. Thousands of young people marry at early ages in spite of economic handicaps, and carry on the struggle for status together. This seems to be especially true in those groups for whom the struggle is all but hopeless, as in the lower ranks of unskilled labor. Others, as indicated by recent tendencies for more early marriages and a lowered birth rate, are encouraged to marry by the assurance of freedom from the immediate responsibility of children provided by a knowledge of contraception.

## CELIBACY AND ABNORMAL SEX RATIOS

Another factor tending to delay or prevent marriage in modern society is the abnormal sex ratios of the community. Occupational specialization and the high mobility of the individual bring about local distributions of the population in which one sex greatly outnumbers the other. A small excess of men in the same community is necessary under existing conditions to give the greatest opportunity for marriage; any deviation from this ratio, while it greatly affects the chances of marriage for women, decreases somewhat the total number of marriages. Practically every community in the United States shows some abnormality in its sex ratio. The rural regions generally have an excess of males; the cities generally have an excess of females. Within the city itself are variations of considerable magnitude. The sexual segregation resulting from division of labor interferes greatly with the association of men and women with each other and consequently prevents many marriages.

In addition to the variations in sex ratio measured in terms of spatial distribution, something similar is found in terms of social distribution. Social mobility in America is comparatively high. If, then, the sexes have different rates of mobility, as seems to be the case, the sex ratios of the various classes may be disturbed. The barriers of social distance interfere somewhat with marriage across class lines. To what extent this condition decreases the number of marriages it is impossible to say, but that it has an appreciable effect may be logically inferred. Somewhat similar is the effect of the cultural heterogeneity characteristic of the population of the United States. Racial and religious differences reduce by large numbers the persons available for marriage to each individual, quite aside from differences in social standing.

Physical and personal abnormalities also have an adverse effect upon marriage. Of the former, some are congenital and consequently beyond the reach of social remedies. Others are acquired, sometimes as the result of sexual irregularities induced by celibacy. Abnormalities of the personality may result in

celibacy when they are of so serious a character as to render the afflicted person unacceptable as a spouse. In some instances unfavorable attitudes toward marriage, such as the belief that sex is sinful and degrading, may result in voluntary celibacy.

#### UNMET NEEDS OF UNMARRIED PERSONS

Unless we assume that the individual satisfactions to be derived from marriage are wholly supererogatory, it must be concluded that unmarried persons suffer more or less in consequence of their celibacy. This is conspicuously true with respect to sex. In our society marriage has theoretically a monopoly on sex in the sense that no sex relations outside of marriage are socially approved. At the same time, the urge to sex activity is recognized as existing in all normal human beings. It is probable that the desire is awakened by social stimuli rather than through instinct, but it is not likely that any person grows to adulthood in our society without meeting such stimuli. The power of the sex urge is shown by the fact that in spite of the social disapproval of sex relations outside marriage, a considerable proportion of both men and women have violated the social code in this respect, and there is a tendency for such violation to increase as social pressure is mitigated.<sup>1</sup> It may be fairly concluded that for celibates to forego sex relations in accordance with the demands of morality entails a certain amount of hardship.

#### MARRIAGE VERSUS FRIENDSHIP

Long-continued friendly or affectionate relations with eligible persons of the opposite sex are scarcely possible outside of marriage. The demand of society that such relations be extended to include all the obligations of husband and wife, and thereupon be properly agreed to in marriage, serves to prevent unmarried men and women from maintaining close friendships. It is completely taken for granted that a man can have

<sup>1</sup> See Dickinson, R. L., and Beam, L., *The Single Woman*, 1934; Gallichan, W. M., *The Great Unmarried*, 1916; Hamilton, G. V., *A Research in Marriage*, 1929; and Wile, Ira S., *Sex Life of the Unmarried Adult*, 1934.



no legitimate interest in a woman other than as a potential wife, and that a woman can show no interest in a man without thereby indicating a desire to marry him. The exceptions found in sophisticated circles are not numerous enough to affect the situation as a whole. The result is that celibates who wish to conform to the demands of morality are forced to content themselves with homosexual friendships and associations.

### COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

The mobility of the celibate and his freedom from attachments and obligations no doubt have their attractive aspects. It is pleasant to be able to come and go at will, to move at a moment's notice, to have no duties toward other persons. But this condition has disadvantages of a serious sort. The foot-loose bachelor lacks the steadying influence of regular habits and of enduring social relations. His personality suffers from the fact that his behavior is of no consequence to anyone but himself. He cannot expand his self into a family, a neighborhood or a community, because he is not attached to any such groups. If he no longer remains attached to his parents, he has, strictly speaking, no home.

The unmarried woman is not so free as the unmarried man. Even though she may have no genuine family connections, she is expected to attach herself to a family group. If she fails to do this, she suffers great loss of status. In every way, she must be more circumspect in her behavior than the man. For compliance with these stricter requirements she receives no greater compensation; in fact, she may be hindered considerably thereby in her quest for friends. In many respects, the unmarried woman is less free to move about in society than the married woman, a circumstance that works hardship on the former, who needs freedom to seek the companionship of men eligible to marriage.

### PROSTITUTION

The barter of sex favors for pay has existed so long that the practice has been aptly described as the "oldest profession."

Its appearance seems to be coincident with the rise of economic considerations in marriage. When a man who wishes to marry must buy his bride from her father or be prepared to support her after marriage, there will be some men who can never marry and others who must postpone the event for varying lengths of time. In many instances, moreover, legitimate marriage is made difficult or expensive by laws, religious beliefs or regulations, custom or taboo. Hereby is created the condition which makes prostitution possible. When, furthermore, the economic system is such as to deny to women the opportunity to make a satisfactory living outside of marriage, prostitution becomes almost inevitable.

In actual practice, it is not carried on by unmarried persons alone. Many prostitutes, as well as their patrons, are or have been married, but their connection with prostitution clearly proclaims the failure of their married life, if not its actual termination. Either they have discontinued living in marriage or they continue on an unsatisfactory basis. It seems clear enough, therefore, that prostitution, at least when it appears on a large scale, is a by-product of the malfunctioning of the family as an institution.

Prostitution has been found among people living in small communities, low in culture, but it thrives most freely in the city. In the United States, at present, prostitution is almost exclusively an urban phenomenon, relatively more extensive in the larger cities than in the smaller. Among the chief reasons for this fact is the greater opportunity for anonymity afforded by the city as compared with the open country or the small town. The disapproval of prostitution, though probably stronger in the rural areas than in the cities, is everywhere so powerful as to compel the patron of prostitution to seek his satisfactions furtively and secretly. Moreover, the social ostracism inflicted upon the prostitute is more easily endured in the city, where the number of outcasts may be large enough to permit the formation of a social group of satisfactory size, or where she can manage to maintain her connections with respectability by concealing her illicit sex activities. Only the maze of the large city can meet these requirements.

## METHODS OF PROSTITUTION

Walking the streets at night and soliciting passing men has been since time immemorial the standard procedure of prostitutes. With the organization of vice on a large-scale, business basis, this method has tended to give way to the brothel, in which, as a rule, a number of prostitutes ply their trade under the direction and control of a manager. Solicitation may be carried on from the doors and windows of the house or by judicious word-of-mouth advertising through bell boys, runners, pimps, and cab drivers. Occasionally, printed advertising matter may be distributed.

Other methods include the operation of "call flats" to which prostitutes, usually only semi-professional, may be summoned by the keeper to meet patrons, and the activities of independent prostitutes, who often live in respectable neighborhoods and who secure patrons through inconspicuous solicitation in hotels, dance halls, or wherever men with money can be found. Through the use of automobiles, they are able to carry on solicitation far away from their place of residence. In the last twenty-five years, the activities of organized vice have declined, while those of unorganized vice have increased. W. C. Reckless, reporting on conditions in Chicago, summarizes his findings in part as follows:

The available data show that there are not as many open houses of prostitution today as in the 1910 era; that vice emporia today run more sporadically and under cover; that they have fewer prostitutes per resort; that they have sought out more decentralized neighborhoods of the city in contrast to the almost complete concentration of resorts in the near central (downtown) areas of 1910 . . . that the caste of the prostitute has broken down; that many prostitutes are now able to lead an existence independent of syndicated brothels and to escape "identification with the prostitute class"; that organized, protected or syndicated vice has continued to a diminishing extent from the days of the segregated district in spite of suppressive measures, due to affiliations with the police, political machines, and gang rule; that since 1910 or the pre-suppression era there has been a notable growth of cabarets and road-houses which had a direct or indirect relation to the shift in the

business of vice, to developments in commercialized recreation, and to changes in the life and habits of city dwellers; that within the city vice resorts tend to locate themselves in neighborhoods or areas which show the highest incidence of related social problems and the most marked indexes of population disturbance, that is, in areas of greatest social disorganization—areas where vice can thrive, although sporadically, in spite of the hammer blows of public suppression.<sup>2</sup>

The changes indicated do not, of course, prove that there has been a decrease in extra-marital sex relations. Certain observations suggest that prostitution has become so completely decentralized, possibly as a result of the use of the automobile, that although less conspicuous it may be as extensive as ever. Other studies suggest that if prostitution has decreased it may have done so through a lessening of the demand following the recent loosening of sex morals and the consequent increase of illicit sex relations among the unmarried of all classes.

#### EXTENT OF PROSTITUTION

If we accepted as accurate the declarations of occupations as given to the census takers and reported by the Census Bureau, we should conclude that there are no prostitutes in the United States. The illegal character of prostitution naturally causes those engaged in it to hide the fact, so far as possible. From sources other than the census, we know that there are many thousands of women who make a living by this occupation. The exact number is impossible to determine, not only because of deliberate attempts to conceal the facts, but also because of the high turnover in the occupation and because of the lack of a satisfactory definition of prostitution.

The legal and moral obstacles encountered in prostitution have served to make it a marginal occupation in the sense that it is acceptable only to those who can find no other way to make a satisfactory living. Women who are unemployed or whose occupational skill is so poor as to enable them to earn

<sup>2</sup> *Vice in Chicago*, p. vii. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933.

only an inadequate wage and women with dependents requiring greater expenditure than can be earned legitimately are conspicuous among those who enter prostitution voluntarily. These women are also likely to leave it at the first opportunity. Some of them marry; others find sufficiently remunerative positions in socially acceptable occupations. Those who remain are forced out when loss of attractiveness makes it impossible for them to secure customers. For the majority, the years of service in the occupation are few, and for many of these the actual practice of it is intermittent or occasional. These conditions make it practically impossible to secure even an approximately accurate census of the women engaged in prostitution.

As suggested, the problem is further complicated by the difficulty of definition. Obviously all women who make a living by engaging in promiscuous sex relations for pay should be included. Should all others be left out? What of those whose lapses are only occasional and whose living is in the main supplied by income from a legitimate source? Or those who ask no pay or who are not promiscuous? What of the kept mistresses? All of these are violators of the moral code, and our natural tendency is to lump them all together and stamp them with disapproval. Yet there are differences within the group which must be recognized. Even the law, by its definitions, admits that they are not all equally delinquent.

Our knowledge of the number of prostitutes is practically limited to those who may be described as "public" or "professional," that is, those known for what they are to everyone who comes in contact with them. The streetwalker with a police record and the inmate of a notorious disorderly house are examples. Naturally, not all of these can be found and counted. It has been estimated that there are between a quarter and a half million such women in the United States. In addition, there is a large number of "clandestine" and "occasional" prostitutes. Reitman, grouping together prostitutes and promiscuous women of every description, places the total for Chicago at 99,800.<sup>8</sup> Reckless's study indicates that there has been a

<sup>8</sup> *The Second Oldest Profession*, 1931, pp. 6-8.

decided decrease in the number of prostitutes in Chicago between 1910 and 1931.<sup>4</sup>

#### SUPPLY AND DEMAND

As is true of all transactions of an economic character, prostitution can exist only when there is both a supply of prostitutes and a demand for their services. Supply and demand, however, are by no means independent of each other. The extent of the one tends to influence the extent of the other. Thus the presence of many prostitutes in a community will tend to stimulate the demand. A species of advertising will serve to increase the number of men who will seek the services of the prostitute. However, it is the presence of a number of men whose sex impulses find no legitimate gratification which constitutes the essential demand which readily calls forth a supply to meet it. Writing on this point, Gallichan says:

The discouragement of licit sex-unions by economic, legislative, and ecclesiastic hindrances is one of the flagrant sources of irregularity in sexual life.<sup>5</sup>

Thus prostitution always appears in new, frontier or seaport communities or in army camps, all of which consist mainly of young unmarried men. As the proportion of resident wives in the community increases, the demand for prostitution decreases. Control and elimination become correspondingly easier.

The chief reason for the existence of a supply of prostitutes is to be found in the economic system which ascribes to the sex responses of women an economic value. Under the aegis of marriage, a woman receives a living in return for a sex monopoly granted to the husband. Ideally, marriage should include mutual affection, and in the majority of cases it undoubtedly does, but since it is impossible for society to force persons to be affectionate, this part of the marriage relation escapes control. It often escapes control of the spouses themselves, since they are more often victims than masters of their own feelings. Society must, then, be content to control and

<sup>4</sup> *Vice in Chicago*, 1933, pp. 15-24.

<sup>5</sup> *The Great Unmarried*, p. 11. London: T. Werner Laurie, Ltd., 1916.

regulate the outward obligations of marriage, which is done often to the detriment of its more important elements. The result is a condition in which men buy and women sell sex in marriage. It is but natural that some men should be so situated as to find it necessary to seek sex satisfaction at less than the established price. Competition forces some women to sell themselves at reduced rates. The consequent exchange of goods and services is prostitution.

#### CAUSAL FACTORS IN INDIVIDUAL CASES

Like the average person in the choice of occupation, the prostitute does not often enter her career after careful deliberation upon its advantages and disadvantages. She is the victim of circumstances, of a social as well as of an economic kind, which ultimately direct her into a path which she would have avoided had she known in the beginning where it was leading.

Occasionally, low wages and a mere suggestion are sufficient to turn a working girl into a prostitute. Even in such a case, however, it is probable that certain social contacts had previously made the girl familiar with and tolerant of sex irregularities. The low status of the household servant girl and the constant display of wealth observed by the department store workers would seem to make these groups peculiarly susceptible to the temptations of prostitution, in which sociability and luxury appear to be so easily secured. The various groups of prostitutes studied do not, however, show any uniformity of distribution as to previous occupation, except that the occupations most frequently given are relatively unskilled and low paid.

The unfulfilled desire for companionship and affection, familiar in some degree to everyone as loneliness, makes the unattached girl an easy victim of the demoralizing influences of public amusements or of the wiles of the procurer. According to Reitman, the procurer or pimp "is the greatest instigator of prostitution, does more than any other class to encourage it, profits most by it . . ." <sup>6</sup> The demand, in the form of opportunity for profits, thus results in a supply through the ex-

<sup>6</sup> *The Second Oldest Profession*, p. xiv. New York: Vanguard Press, 1931.

plotitation of girls who might not have become prostitutes but for the special efforts of exploiters.

Investigations have revealed a great variety of reasons given by prostitutes for entering upon their careers. Doubtless some of the reasons are given with the object of gaining the sympathy of the investigator or of public authorities; if taken at face value, they suggest that almost any kind of misfortune or demoralizing circumstance may lead a young girl astray. In view of the fact that some of the reasons appear to be insufficient to tempt a normal person into socially disapproved conduct, it should be noted that these groups are not normal. Many girls have never had the opportunity to make the wholesome contacts that would have saved them to respectability. Others are mentally deficient to such a degree as to be unable to care for their own best interests. These easily fall prey to the allurements of prostitution. Mental defect is common among prostitutes who fall into the hands of the legal authorities. It is probable that only the more stupid ones are caught, yet the indications are that the average mentality of the whole group is decidedly low. Just as persons of low mentality are forced to accept the poorly paid, unskilled occupations, so also they are forced into the socially disapproved occupations, which persons of normal mentality are able to avoid.

Girls of foreign nationalities in America, of the first or second generation, are sometimes subjected to conditions which lead them into prostitution. The immigrant girl is sometimes enticed into it because of her ignorance; though more often she resorts to it because of the breakdown of the primary group controls of the family and neighborhood. Few instances of actual "white slavery," that is, compulsion, are found among prostitutes, and very young girls are rarely involved.<sup>7</sup>

#### EFFECT UPON THE FAMILY

Foremost among the undesirable consequences of prostitution is the weakening of the institution of marriage and the

<sup>7</sup> See Reckless, W. C., *Vice in Chicago*, 1933, pp. 32-68, and Reitman, Ben L., *The Second Oldest Profession*, 1931, pp. 75-7.



family. Promiscuity on the part of unmarried men is not conducive to fidelity after marriage. Habits once established are difficult to break. Sex relations on a commercial basis are cheapened, robbed of the high emotional sanction with which they should be invested and reduced to the mere gratification of unsocialized physical appetite. Contact between the sexes on a plane regarded so low by society inevitably lessens the respect of each for the other and endangers the prospect of happy marriage for both. Prolonged connections with prostitution may render the individual emotionally incapable of living a normal married life.

#### DISEASE

The two common venereal diseases, syphilis and gonorrhea, are spread, directly or indirectly, through prostitution. The vast majority of public women have one or both diseases at some time during their careers. Dr. Ben L. Reitman, whose experience has placed him in a uniquely favorable position for observation, states:

My personal observation with 50,000 prostitutes in the last ten years who have either passed through my office, the clinics of the Cook County Jail, the Chicago House of Correction, or the Morals Court Clinic of the Chicago Health Department has revealed that 10 per cent had active gonorrhea, 1 per cent primary syphilis with a chancre, 2 per cent secondary syphilis with visible eruptions, and 12 per cent latent syphilis where the positive Wasserman and Kahn tests were the only evidence. . . .

. . . it must be understood that every woman who hustles for a year will acquire the disease [gonorrhea].<sup>8</sup>

While they have the disease in an active form they are practically certain to pass it on to numerous customers, who may thereupon infect their wives and who have been known to infect their children also. The misery of ill health follows in the wake of venereal disease. A considerable portion of the sterility of married women and much of the surgical treatment of the reproductive organs which they must undergo are

<sup>8</sup> *The Second Oldest Profession*, pp. 96-9. New York: Vanguard Press, 1931.

the result of syphilitic and gonorrheal infections. The increased use of prophylactics and the recently improved methods of treating these diseases have made them less prevalent than formerly, but there are still many cases to be found.

### PERSONAL DEMORALIZATION

The strong social disapproval visited upon the prostitute makes it extremely difficult for her to avoid personal demoralization. Denied social relations on terms of equality even by the men who employ her, she is forced into the sordid company of other ostracized persons. These persons, having already lost their self-respect, can but hasten to complete her degradation. If the group with which she associates is fairly large and fairly stable, she may be able to make an adjustment to life within it. By avoiding the outside world, she may maintain an existence not wholly intolerable. The relations of affection and subservience entered into with men who exploit her indicate how desperate is her need for human love and companionship—for relations within which she may make some sort of emotional response, even though the object be unworthy. Conditions permitting adjustments of this kind seldom obtain for any considerable period; sooner or later the prostitute is forced to face the fact that she is an outcast. Since society offers her no rewards, she readily renounces the obligations which it imposes. She is no longer amenable to the controls successfully exercised upon the ordinary person. Since the only effective penalty for violation of the social code is loss of status and since the prostitute has no status to lose, she may adopt any form of antisocial behavior which presents itself. If crime promises to be in the least profitable, she does not hesitate to engage in it. The disproportionately large number of prostitutes who are also criminals indicates the connection between the two forms of social adjustment involved.

### THE HOMELESS MAN

In the adult male population is a group of individuals whose family ties are either non-existent or so slight as to exercise

no control over their actions. These men have no homes and consequently no permanent residence. Being essentially wanderers, they seldom form an integral part of the larger communities in which they live. Their only contact with organized society is likely to come through the police department. Instead of belonging to society, they are obliged to content themselves with a loose social organization of their own, which is quite distinct and apart from that of the settled community.

In keeping with their vagrant manner of living, homeless men do not usually have permanent jobs or steady incomes. Unskilled casual and seasonal labor provides them with only a precarious livelihood. Low wages, long hours, and unsatisfactory conditions generally prevail in the occupations employing workers of this sort. For these and other reasons, many of them refuse to work except under the pressure of immediate necessity. Often they supplement their incomes by begging and petty theft.

The major portion of this army of wanderers spends the pleasant months of summer "on the road." With no particular destination and no haste, the homeless man "travels" from place to place, working, begging, or stealing when the need for food drives him to action. With the coming of cold weather he repairs to a large city, where, with others of his kind, he spends the winter in idleness. If he has a little money and the ability to manage it carefully, he may live in a cheap hotel in comparative comfort and have plenty of cheap food. If he is improvident, ill, or merely unfortunate, he may be reduced to begging or stealing food and may be obliged to seek free lodging in a police station or mission. In any event, he continues his way of living unaffected by the misfortunes and sufferings which characterize it.

#### NUMBERS

An exact census of homeless men is impossible to secure. The very fact of their homelessness and their extreme mobility increases the difficulty of counting them. Varying industrial

conditions may change the number of casuals in a given place within wide limits. No other group responds so quickly to "hard times" or "good times," or to the effects of season and weather. Writing more than 15 years ago, Nels Anderson found:

A survey of the lodging-house and hotel population, supplemented by the census reports of the areas in which they live, indicates that the number of homeless men in Chicago ranges from 30,000 in good times to 75,000 in hard times.<sup>9</sup>

According to Sutherland and Locke,<sup>10</sup> the shelters for transients in Chicago had a population of 20,000 during the average month covered by the study. August Vollmer<sup>11</sup> estimates that 1,500,000 youths are wandering about in the United States. Indications are that the number has increased greatly as a result of the economic depression of recent years, and that few of these can ever be restored to settled community life.

#### AGE

In age distribution, these homeless wanderers range from the youngest boy capable of independent existence to the octogenarian on the brink of the grave. The proportion of the various age groups represented cannot be determined, since those who come to the attention of social agencies are selected on the basis of their need for help, a condition most frequently associated with extreme youth or old age. The man between twenty and forty-five escapes attention because of his ability to care for his needs without assistance. Age distributions of homeless men who apply to agencies for help cannot be regarded, therefore, as representative of the whole group. At the same time, there are good reasons for supposing that the age distribution of homeless men is abnormal, that is, different from that of the male population at large. From our experience with persons who become wanderers we

<sup>9</sup> *The Hobo*, p. 3. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923.

<sup>10</sup> Sutherland, Edwin H., and Locke, Harvey J., *Twenty Thousand Homeless Men*, 1936, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> *The Police and Modern Society*, 1936, p. 5.

know that they seldom give up this mode of life once they have entered upon it. Since this is also true of those who enter skilled occupations, it may be inferred that the age distribution of homeless men and of skilled workers is similar. This means that there are abnormally large numbers of them in the upper age groups. Possibly the homeless men may show somewhat smaller proportions among the oldest groups due to their higher death rate. Some light is thrown on the question by the study of Sutherland and Locke,<sup>12</sup> in which it was found that the average age of the transients observed was 45 and by Webb,<sup>13</sup> who noted that the modal age of 500 migratory-casual laborers was in the age group 35 to 44 years, inclusive.

#### OCCUPATION

The hold of the homeless man upon the economic basis of life is most uncertain. Lacking the disposition to spend the time necessary for learning a trade or for acquiring a reputation for diligence or trustworthiness, he seldom advances far beyond the ranks of the casual common laborer. The treatment received by this class of worker at the hands of bosses and employers is often far from kind; consequently he readily accepts the idea that society is against him. There is, indeed, little in his contact with society to uphold the contrary view. Even if he does not become definitely antisocial, a few discriminations and hardships convince him of the hopelessness of any attempt to find a satisfactory job with satisfactory pay and working conditions. Thenceforth his economic activities may be confined to pilfering and mooching.

A classification of homeless men based in large part upon the amount of work they do has been devised by Nels Anderson. In this classification, they are placed in five groups based upon the extent to which they work and the extent to which they wander.<sup>14</sup> A somewhat similar classification of typical

<sup>12</sup> Sutherland, Edwin H., and Locke, Harvey J., *Twenty Thousand Homeless Men*, 1936.

<sup>13</sup> Webb, John N., *The Migratory-Casual Worker*, 1937, p. 87.

<sup>14</sup> *The Hobo*, 1923, p. 265.

homeless men has been suggested by Sutherland and Locke,<sup>15</sup> who note that the chief occupation is unskilled labor entered at an early age and continued throughout the entire working life.

### SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Some idea of the social background of the homeless man as well as the extent of his wanderings may be inferred from the nativity of inmates of the Chicago shelters, of whom 20 per cent were born in Chicago, 30 per cent in other parts of the United States, and 50 per cent in foreign countries. With relatively little education and occupational training, many of these men left their parental homes at an early age (16 per cent before they were fifteen). After leaving, only 20 per cent have had more than casual contacts with their parental families, and more than half have had practically no contacts at all.<sup>16</sup>

The majority of homeless men are unmarried; those who have been married are separated from their wives. They have no dependents, obviously, since they are themselves frequently dependent. The men in the Chicago shelters had earned an average of 25 dollars per week at their last jobs; 40 per cent of them had been transients; their I.Q.'s averaged much lower than those of the draft army.<sup>17</sup>

### CAUSAL FACTORS

Not every man who loses his job becomes a wanderer; yet the failure to make a satisfactory economic adjustment due to unemployment enters frequently as the determining factor of a career "on the road." Sometimes accident or disease has partially incapacitated the man for work, thereby necessitating his accepting a job with lower standing and less pay. In other cases stupidity or physical weakness may have made the man

<sup>15</sup> *Twenty Thousand Homeless Men*, 1936, pp. 52 ff.

<sup>16</sup> Sutherland, Edwin H., and Locke, Harvey J., *Twenty Thousand Homeless Men*, 1936, pp. 35 ff.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35 ff.

virtually unemployable, thus leaving him little opportunity to make an honest living. In either event, the difficulties of adjustment might easily be avoided by a refusal to face them, by running away. Since the difficulty in question inevitably accompanies the individual, he cannot permanently escape it in this fashion; he must keep on running away for the rest of his life.

The responsibilities of marriage prove unbearable to some of the men who undertake them. When such a man lacks the resources or the resourcefulness for escaping his bonds by way of the divorce court, he may do so by desertion. The continued existence of legal family ties and the fact that the deserter is regarded as a pseudo-criminal prevents his forming new alliances, consequently determining for him a life without a home. Unfortunate experiences or acts may make a man's position in the community unbearable or may so affect him emotionally as to render his remaining there impossible. Finally, it may be mentioned, a man may have committed a serious crime, escaped arrest, and become a fugitive from justice. The danger to such a man in having his identity become known will operate effectively to keep him from forming any permanent social affiliations.

A considerable number of homeless men display tendencies to queerness. Though not so badly deranged as to be held insane, they are so abnormal as not to be able to make normal adjustments. Their failures are quite likely to aggravate their mental quirks and thus render their adjustment still more difficult to accomplish. Men of this type are recognizable by their strange, radical, and antisocial points of view. In nearly every instance, these views include the belief that their holders are victimized and oppressed by society.

#### THE CONSEQUENCES OF A HOMELESS LIFE

In our society, status is local in character. A man rises and holds his position by becoming known among his associates for worthy achievements or as a member of acceptable groups. Only the man whose status is extremely high can leave his own

community without sacrificing the major part of his social standing. For the mass of mankind, social status is not measured beyond the bounds of the neighborhood or the community of personal acquaintance. The homeless man, therefore, must inevitably accept low status. He can carry no passport to show that he is a respectable citizen, entitled to consideration in accordance with his rank. He has no standing other than that attributed to his class by society. This is so little above that ascribed to the ordinary criminal that it serves but slightly as a means of preventing crime among homeless men. The fear of losing status is a powerful preventive of crime, but among those with little or no status to lose it becomes inoperative.

Poverty is the certain lot of the homeless man. In the first place, his income, derived from unskilled labor of the meanest sort, is not sufficient to leave a surplus after deducting the legitimate expenses of living even according to the most moderate standard. Second, no convenient method of saving is available to the wanderer even if he could secure a surplus for the purpose. To invest in tangible property is out of the question. He could scarcely take it with him on his travels, and, if left uncared for, it would soon be appropriated by someone else. He is apt to distrust banks. The setting of the banking business, with its trappings of marble and brass, make the man in tatters so uncomfortable that he is not disposed to enter such a place more often than is absolutely necessary.

The lack of resources to tide over the emergencies that are practically certain to come in the life of every individual, such as sickness, accidental injury, or unemployment, brings another train of evils to the homeless man. If he becomes ill at work he dare not stop for fear of losing his job. He cannot afford to go to the physician for any illness that does not immediately threaten his life. When forced at last to seek relief, his condition is often so bad that it costs him more in time and nursing to restore him to health than if he had been able to care for himself properly in the beginning.

Unless bedridden or seriously crippled, the homeless man



does not easily arouse the sympathy nor secure the aid of charitable organizations and individuals. The limited funds available for charity must be spent in care of those most conspicuously in need, particularly those resident in the community. As a result, the homeless man may be forced to resort to illegal means to keep from starving. Necessity unhampered by effective social restraint easily leads to violation of the law.

The most serious consequence of the wanderer's way of life is the personal disintegration that so frequently accompanies failure to find a satisfactory place in society. This disintegration may range all the way from a mild paranoia to serious mental disease. Mental disorders are often unconsciously utilized as a means of escape from intolerable reality. So also are alcoholism and drug addiction, both common among homeless men. The absence of opportunity for normal, socially regulated sex life leads to abnormal adjustments in this field also. Various perversions, homosexuality being among the more frequent, are so common that they may be regarded as normal for the group.

Taking it as a whole, the life of the homeless man offers astonishingly few opportunities for the gaining of satisfactions. It is practically certain to end in misery after a period filled with vicissitudes. Perhaps it is not to be wondered at that a large percentage of homeless men choose self-inflicted death as the best way out.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See Cavan, Ruth Shonle, *Suicide*, 1928, pp. 90-3.

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## REMEDIES FOR FAMILY DISORGANIZATION

THE numerous symptoms of disintegration of the family, taken by themselves, seem to point directly to the ultimate cessation of family life. The increasing divorce rate, the falling birth rate, the loss of parental authority—any of these, if continued, would end only with the disappearance of the family. Fortunately for our ancient, traditional values, we may state with certainty that the family is still strong among us and predict confidently that it will remain so for many years to come. The functions of the family are too important for us to permit the destruction of the institution through which they are carried on.

The formal aspects of the family are guaranteed by the necessity under our economic system of providing for the transmission of property from one generation to the next. So long as private property exists, this function must be performed. By custom deep-rooted in time, this function is the business of the family. We may expect, therefore, that in the future there will be more rather than less concern for the legal side of the marriage relation. "Common law marriages" will lose what remains of their standing; marriage, divorce, and birth records will be scrupulously kept. The official familial relations of the individual will never be lost sight of.

The need of family life as a means of developing personality in spouses and parents as well as in children assures us of the continuation of the home, where the several members of the family may develop their personalities through interaction with each other. Men and women become more nearly complete personally through the associations of marriage. As parents, their personalities grow through projection into the

lives of their children. The children themselves receive their fundamental training in the family. No satisfactory method other than the family for carrying on these functions has been found in our society.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the sheer necessity of the family for social life as we know it, there is another factor which assures us of the continuance of this institution, namely, its adaptability. There are at present actively in progress numerous changes which tend to stabilize the family by fitting it more closely to changed social conditions generally. Some of these changes, such as equalitarianism, the small family system, the companionate marriage, and the decreasing birth rate, appear to be almost entirely spontaneous in that they are not the result of any deliberate plan on the part of society to bring about improvements in the family through these changes. On the contrary, there is considerable opposition to the intrusion of the changes into the family.

#### THE EQUALITARIAN FAMILY

The equalitarian family, as defined by Mowrer, is that

of the middle and professional classes. Here there are children, though the families tend to be small. There is the minimum of superordination and subordination in the relationship between husband and wife. . . . The wife has interests outside the home, delegating the care of the children largely to a nurse-maid.<sup>2</sup>

It is obviously an adaptation of the family to the prevailing individualism of today. Whatever one may think of the desirability of individualism, he must agree that the family can serve its purposes well only by adapting itself to the deep currents of social life. The family must prepare its members to play appropriate rôles in life outside the home; it can do this only by duplicating, in its own confines, those conditions which the members must meet as they go out into the world.

<sup>1</sup> See Dawson, Carl A., and Gettys, Warner E., *An Introduction to Sociology*, Revised Edition, 1935, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> Mowrer, Ernest R., *Family Disorganization*, p. 111. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927.

Already a large proportion of American families have developed equalitarian characteristics. No longer does the father rule as a stern autocrat; the parents share in the determination of their own actions and in the control of the children. In controlling children, arbitrary methods are giving way to the social pressure of approval and disapproval, the children being allowed great latitude in their choice of behavior.

#### THE SMALL FAMILY SYSTEM

The ever-growing concern of society for the welfare of its younger members has so far increased the responsibilities of parents as to make small families highly desirable if not quite compulsory from the economic standpoint. Actual realization of the small family ideal has had to wait till recently, when the development of contraceptive techniques has made it possible. Already there are signs of a complete reversal of the general attitude of approval of large families so common in the past. There is still public praise of the mother of many children; privately she is beginning to be regarded as ignorant and vulgar. The response of the family to the need for greater care and education of youth consists largely of a reduction in the number of children. Parents are thereby enabled to concentrate their energies and resources upon a few children, instead of spreading them out over a larger number. We should expect, therefore, to find that the children of small families reach adulthood in better health and physical condition, and with more education than the children of large families. If this be true, the reduction in the number of children is certainly to be regarded as a desirable change, even if the rate of increase in the population is thereby greatly reduced.

#### COMPANIONATE MARRIAGE

Henry S. Maine, in his *Ancient Law*, published in 1861, observed that as societies progress along the road to civilization the position of the individual becomes less and less fixed. He noted that individuals were permitted ever-widening choices

of action and that their relations with their fellows, instead of being governed exclusively by custom, were governed more and more by their own declared intentions. He referred to his observations as the change from status to contract.

Although Maine did not write specifically on marriage, he would scarcely have needed to change his conclusions had he done so. True, we still find marriage defined as a "status growing out of a contract," but we are beginning to regard many situations in marriage from the viewpoint of contract rather than of status. Divorce itself is a denial of the status principle. As long as divorces were limited to "annulments," in which the marriage was dissolved on the ground that on account of some previously existing disability of one or both of the parties no marriage had ever existed, the principle was preserved, even though, no doubt, in some cases, at the cost of accuracy. When divorce is recognized as the legal dissolution of a genuine marriage, we admit that for certain lapses or disabilities on the part of one spouse the other may be relieved of his obligations. This is virtually the same as with other civil contracts. We still maintain the fiction that the marriage vow cannot be broken by mutual consent; actually we are permitting it on a large scale, and many persons are urging that we may as well be honest about it and make it legal.

With the terms of the marriage contract we have not yet tampered much. We insist that since marriage is a status alike for all who enter it, no premarital agreements in modification of the terms of marriage are valid. The only exception to this general rule occurs in connection with property settlements, since property interests are regarded as even more important to maintain than those of matrimony. But the courts will not uphold agreements between husband and wife pertaining to division of labor, extent of contribution to the upkeep of the family, the number of children to be reared, or the duration of the marriage. All the duties expressed or implied in the marriage vow are imposed in their entirety upon all spouses from the moment of the completion of the wedding ceremony. Yet it cannot be denied that many a marriage

follows discussions as to future course of action and agreements with regard to such course, which are of immense importance to the parties and but for which the marriage would never be undertaken. Since the agreements are extra-legal, there is no redress for one spouse if the other fails in his part of the bargain, but unquestionably the success of the marriage in such circumstances depends greatly upon the fidelity with which the partners live up to the agreements. Breach of contract is likely to cause the offended spouse to rush to the divorce court, where a legally accepted reason will be adduced for the termination of the marriage. In many cases, doubtless, one or both of the partners coldly calculate on the availability of divorce as a means of redress and escape if the venture should turn out badly. In this way there occurs, in fact, if not in theory, modification of the marriage status which makes it resemble more and more the ordinary civil contract.

Among the varieties of premarital agreements, the mutually accepted decision to have no children has occurred with sufficient frequency to attract a good deal of attention. The form of family resulting has been given a name, the companionate, and its merits and demerits have been discussed at some length in print. In this type of family, begun and continued without the expectation of children, the personal response aspect of the relationship receives heavy emphasis. The resulting situation is quite different from that of the family in which childbearing is awaited in vain or postponed until a future time. The companionate must be prepared to withstand the criticism of those who consider it the duty of every normal married couple to bear children and who believe that sex relations border on immorality if not to some extent at least engaged in for the purpose of procreation. Such criticism has its origin firmly rooted in the past, when a rapid increase in the population was necessary to the survival of the group or, at any rate, necessary to the improvement of the conditions of life. The persistence of groups which reproduced rapidly would tend to fix this characteristic and its supporting rationalizations immovably in the mores.

If this inference is correct, it might be predicted that as rapid increase is no longer of great value to the groups making up society, we shall gradually come to approve of the companionate. Here, however, enters another factor, namely, the extraordinarily rapid fall of the birth rate which has taken place in recent decades. In many countries, including our own, the birth rate is no longer sufficient to maintain the population in its present numbers. When the time comes, as it probably will before many years, in which our government systematically propagandizes and subsidizes for more children, the deliberately childless couple will not escape. Social pressure to induce childbearing will make itself felt throughout the married population, utilizing whatever aid may be gained from interpreting resistance as immorality, treason, or bad taste, but undoubtedly the childless will be singled out for special attention.

Running counter to the demand of the group leaders for more children will be the desire of the individual to gain more economic security and independence. Under a system in which the parents are required to provide food, clothing, and shelter for their children until they become adults, there will be many who cannot and some who will not undertake to support families. In the past such persons postponed marriage. With the perfection of contraceptive technique, postponement of marriage is no longer so compelling. A disposition to take advantage of this fact through relatively early marriage is already in evidence in the United States. What will be the effect upon marriage and the family when the decline of our population becomes apparent to all can only be guessed.

From the viewpoint of stability, the companionate may be in some degree criticized. The absence of children in this form of family makes it somewhat easier to terminate through divorce than is the family with children. The parties to the contract, having only their own happiness at stake, do not hesitate to bring about a divorce if they think their interests demand it. This condition has led to the belief among some



people that the companionate is essentially a temporary or "trial" marriage, that it is begun with the tacit understanding that it will not endure long, and that consequently it is little better than polygamy. Such a belief is erroneous in that it fails to take into account the many childless couples who remain faithful and devoted to each other for life. At the same time it should be recognized that childlessness does facilitate divorce so extensively that it may be regarded, if one is inclined to see it so, as a cause for divorce. If divorce is invariably an evil, childlessness and any form of marriage which encourages it are also evil to the extent that they are responsible for divorce.

#### THE RÔLE OF CONTRACEPTION

No subject of importance to the family has been so vigorously debated in books and periodicals of recent years as the subject of contraception. The voluntary limitation of offspring is not novel, nor is the practice of achieving it through the artificial prevention of conception, but in America it is only within the past fifty years that small families have come to be desired by the majority of the people. The consequent interest in contraception and the demand for information concerning it have kept the subject almost continuously in our attention. Unfortunately for a sane handling of contraception and its problems, the whole matter has been relegated to the field of sex. Here it is inextricably entangled in a jungle of taboos and prejudices so dark that little light ever penetrates. In spite of much publicity and discussion, few people are able to approach the subject of contraception without feeling themselves in the presence of something shocking, immoral, and obscene. This attitude, with some variations, lies back of a good deal of the opposition to the practice. It is most conspicuous in the case of those who argue that birth control will increase sexual immorality by freeing the perpetrators from the natural consequences of their acts. The assumption is that the only effective restraint upon illicit sex relations is the fear of parenthood. The opposition of certain religious

groups is based upon similar interpretations. To these groups sex behavior is a "low" form of behavior, bordering on sin even at best. It can be tolerated only on the ground that it is undertaken for the purpose of procreation. When engaged in purely for the satisfaction to be derived from them, sex relations become sinful, partly because it is their nature so to be and partly because the divine purpose of such relations, namely, procreation, is not carried out.

An entirely different basis for opposition is represented by those who are concerned about the future of the population. The fall of the birth rate in recent times to such low levels as to endanger the survival of the group is attributed to the rapid spread of the practice of contraception. The differential birth rate as it appears among the several socio-economic strata strongly affirms the truth of this contention. It follows logically, therefore, that if numbers are desired regardless of all else, birth limitation is a bad thing and should be opposed. The assumption, however, that large numbers of people are under all circumstances to be desired may well be questioned.

It seems quite likely that the numerous arguments on the subject of birth control have only served to increase its practice. Comparatively few families in the upper and middle classes at present are as large as might be expected if no form of limitation were used. Evidence tending to show an extensive use of contraceptives comes from an examination of the contraceptives manufacturing industry. Three hundred concerns are reported to be engaged in this industry, one of them selling 20,000,000 contraceptive articles in one year.<sup>3</sup> Herein, it may be noted parenthetically, lies potentially another factor which may some day enter the conflict over birth control, namely, the commercial interests of those who expect to profit from the sale of birth control devices. This will further complicate an issue already deeply involved.

The present state of the question, from the viewpoint of those favoring birth control, is well summed up by R. E.

<sup>3</sup> "Birth Control's Business Baby," *New Republic*, January 17, 1934, Volume LXXVII, pp. 269-72.

Baber, from whose article on the subject the following information has been secured.<sup>4</sup>

**HEALTH.** There is no evidence that sterility, cancer, or drug poisoning are caused by the use of approved methods of birth control. The danger of contracting neuroses from the use of birth control is no greater than that arising from the fear of undesired pregnancy. If it is true that childbearing improves health, it may also be argued that sex life without childbearing improves health. Proper spacing of children and avoidance of childbearing during a period of exhaustion or illness is made possible by birth control, to the obvious benefit of health.

**SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS.** Too many children in a family of limited means will lower the standard of living below the level of efficiency. The ability to defer parenthood encourages marriage and increases marital happiness. There are more than 70,000 illegitimate births and many times this number of abortions annually in the United States. The use of birth control would prevent most of these, to the economic and social benefit of all concerned. Insofar as a large population is difficult to employ and support, birth control is beneficial in that it tends to prevent undue increases in the population. Small families, in which no children are found except those desired, will show less child labor and less delinquency than excessively large families.

**MORALITY AND RELIGION.** Birth control is no more unnatural than other practices of civilized man, for example, housing. There is no ground for comparing birth control with murder. The use of birth control requires more, not less, self-control on part of the partners to a marriage. There may be danger in birth control to the morale of youth; this problem must be met by proper training. The recently advocated "safe period" is by many regarded as not safe. Religious groups are gradually becoming more and more favorable to birth control. Eventually birth control will be generally practiced.

<sup>4</sup> Baber, Ray Erwin, "Birth Control, A Balance Sheet," *Forum*, Vol. LXXXVIII, November, 1932, pp. 294-9.

## FAILURE OF THE FAMILY TO TRANSMIT CULTURE

As indicated in Chapter 3, the family as a household group has ceased to be continuous. Instead, it is begun anew by each couple for itself. No longer do the newlyweds join a going concern where for a time they can serve as apprentices, gradually taking over the numerous tasks and responsibilities of homemaking as their powers develop. Rather, there is a sharp break with the past. The bride leaves the mother's home, where she has played the rôle of daughter, and enters at once upon the duties of mistress of her own home. Ordinarily she does not approach the new position in complete ignorance. As a member of a household she has necessarily learned much that is of value to her, but it is not altogether unlikely that she may lack some important information. Unless she has been especially fortunate in this respect, she probably has had no experience in the care of infants and children. When the family consisted of numerous persons, there was usually a baby or two among them all the time. Young persons learned from observation and experience how to care for the new arrivals. Now the prospective mother must learn from other sources what in the past she would have learned as a matter of course in her parental home while growing up.

Similar difficulties face the young husband. Suddenly moved from his father's house or from his bachelor's quarters, he has many adjustments to make for which his ordinary experiences will not have prepared him. Substantial changes in his habits will be required of him, changes which, if unanticipated, may cause him to regret the loss of his freedom as a single man. Unless his income is far above the average, he may be disagreeably surprised at the amount of money required to meet the expenses of household operation. He may find that the food served in his new home is not like that which his mother used to make; that the household routine instituted by his wife differs greatly from that to which he has been accustomed. All these problems contribute to making extremely difficult an adjustment which, at best, cannot be achieved without an

occasional hitch. Whatever can be done in advance to prepare a man for these problems will increase the chances of success for his marriage.

Candidates for marriage of both sexes are usually more or less ignorant in matters of sex. In this respect, the present does not differ so greatly from the past of two or three generations ago. Tabooed from polite or even decent conversation, sex information has been communicated only under most unfavorable circumstances. Very little beyond the gross biological facts has been available. It is recognized now that sexual maladjustments due to ignorance have caused many divorces and ruined many marriages.

#### EDUCATION FOR MARRIAGE AND PARENTHOOD

To meet the needs indicated in the foregoing paragraphs, the beginnings of a system of education have made their appearance. Colleges and universities are offering courses in home-making and child care. Here and there an institution goes so far as to offer instruction to future husbands and wives in the art of living successfully in marriage. The popularity of these courses shows that students find them of real value. Unfortunately for the rapid progress of this type of education, the number of persons properly prepared to teach the subject is very small.

Sex education in the narrower sense has become an accepted subject in many of the secondary schools. At its best, sex education may do much to break down the unfortunate attitudes toward sex which now prevail and to elevate it to a position of dignity and importance in human life. At its worst, sex education will probably do no harm not counteracted by the dissemination of certain elementary facts relating to biology and hygiene. A time may be envisioned in the distant future when as a result of a saner attitude toward sex, instruction in the subject may be carried on unhampered by taboos. In that day, young people will approach marriage with a full knowledge of the psychology of sex and of the techniques of sex adjustment. The single standard of sex morality will prevail.

## THE SUPPRESSION OF PROSTITUTION

It has long been the object of European and American society to bring all sex relations under the control of the family institution. Great progress toward the final goal has been made, but we are still far short of its attainment. We have had to be satisfied with something less than the ideal. In view of the all but unanimous condemnation of prostitution, its persistence is little short of remarkable. In America stringent laws forbid its practice, the public ignores its existence, and the police act only to prevent scandal.

As is usual in our attempts to bring about social change, we have placed too much reliance upon law, scarcely realizing that laws are not self-enforcing. As a result of the prevalence of puritanism in America, prostitution has been prohibited from early Colonial days. Laws in all the States place prostitution and acts connected therewith in the category of crime and provide penalties for their commission. It has been found impossible to enforce these laws effectively. Police have, therefore, generally made compromises with prostitution. These compromises have been made with the tacit consent of the public, which, hypocritically, has acted as if prostitution did not exist. This attitude has opened the way to bribery and corruption of the officials of law enforcement by prostitutes and the operators of vice resorts. Utilizing their power to prosecute prostitutes and the fact that they are not required by public opinion to do so, police have been enabled to levy tribute on prostitution. In this way organized vice has continued to exist under a licensing system not contemplated by the law.

The public appears to have been much more concerned about the avoidance of the appearance of evil than about the elimination of the evil itself. Consequently, although the complete prohibition of prostitution has failed, numerous regulatory measures have been carried out with a fair degree of success. Unfortunately, the necessity for a minimum of consistency in law has prevented the enactment of statutes for the regulation

of a vice already prohibited. Regulation has been carried out, therefore, through the agency of police rules not formally enacted by legislative bodies.

The most popular form of regulation in the past has been segregation. Certain areas in the city, sometimes called "red light districts," have been assigned to prostitution, with the understanding that its practice must be confined to these areas. In some instances prostitutes have not been permitted to leave the area for any reason whatsoever. Along with segregation have grown up customary rules concerning the manner in which prostitution may advertise or solicit patronage. Street-walking or calling from windows has been prohibited under such regulations. In other instances, registration with medical examination and certification has been attempted, both for the purpose of discouraging prostitution and for the purpose of preventing the spread of venereal disease. Neither of these purposes has been fulfilled according to the expectations expressed at their inception. It has never been possible to compel all the prostitutes in a given city to register with the police. To do so requires an admission on their part of their calling and closes for them the possibility of a return to a life of conventional morality. Furthermore, registration subjects them to rigid police surveillance and exposes them to graft and blackmail. The more clever individuals prefer to take the chance of escaping detection to a deliberate surrender into the hands of the police. This is particularly true of those who have venereal disease and who, in consequence, would be prohibited from the practice of their trade by the examining physician. The attempt to require prostitutes to have certificates showing their freedom from venereal disease has had the undesirable result of giving a false sense of security to the men who consort with them. Periodic examinations, even if perfunctory, may do some good by eliminating the worst cases during the most infectious stages of the disease, but it should be recognized that examinations cannot be made frequently or carefully enough to guarantee freedom from disease. More good has been accomplished through the educational features of medical

examinations than through the process of certification. The practice has served to call the attention of both the prostitute and her patron to the prevalence and seriousness of venereal disease. It has led to the adoption of prophylactics as means of avoiding infection and to utilization of clinics and hospitals for treatment of diseases acquired. General recognition of the public health aspects of venereal diseases has led to the establishment of numerous agencies for the treatment of such diseases, in many of which the treatment is given free.

The gradually increasing severity of the regulations governing prostitution, such as the closing of the red light districts and the prohibition of all forms of open soliciting, has done much to reduce its obvious prevalence. It has also had the effect of changing its character. The automobile and the constantly increasing anonymity of city life are other factors contributing to the change. Modern prostitution is consequently much more scattered and secretive than that of a generation ago. It is possible that the reported increase in promiscuity among women in general has somewhat reduced the demand for the services of the prostitute.

#### REMEDIES FOR ILLEGITIMACY

The attitudes toward illegitimacy, though persistent, are showing some evidence of change. It is not to be expected that society will so far relinquish control over sex as to condone illegitimacy, but it is possible to redefine the situation and to set up duties and obligations for the parents of illegitimate children which will satisfy every reasonable demand. Thus, if entering into sex relations is taken as the essential fact in the establishment of a family, rather than the formal marriage ceremony, the problem of illegitimacy assumes an aspect quite different from that customarily ascribed to it. With the acceptance of this idea in law, illegitimacy will cease to exist. We are still far from such an acceptance, but the trend is clearly in that direction. Several European countries have recently enacted laws more lenient toward illegitimacy. In the United States, North Dakota has taken the lead by legitimizing the



children of unmarried parents, holding the parents responsible for the rearing of the children and giving the children the customary rights of legitimate offspring, including the right to bear the father's name and to inherit his property. It is to be hoped that the removal of legal disabilities from illegitimate children will help to lighten the burden of prejudice heaped upon them. Nothing is to be gained for the family by condemning these individuals; the institution may even be strengthened by requiring certain conformities on the part of unmarried parents, instead of merely convicting them of immorality and casting them out of respectable society. The problem of illegitimate parents who are married but not to each other might be handled in the same way in which we now handle cases of bigamy.

#### REHABILITATION OF FAMILY LIFE

Instead of allowing the family in a crisis to break up, we have undertaken in recent times to find and remove the causes of the crisis before the damage is irreparable. The control of the community mores is no longer effective in forcing spouses to live together in peace when they prefer to quarrel or to separate. For this reason, as well as for many others, there is a great deal of family disorganization in modern times. In the majority of cases, the cause of the difficulty is removable. Often the principals themselves do not understand the nature of their troubles. If, therefore, no one comes along to help them, their family life may be destroyed. Recognizing this condition, we have set up a number of agencies for the purpose of rehabilitating tottering families. The family welfare work of organized charity is ideally engaged in the rebuilding of damaged families. Unfortunately, the family welfare agency does not usually hear of a case before it is economically destitute. Destitution in love or mutual respect may be quite as serious, but it does not ordinarily result in appeals for aid. The economic needs of families who come in contact with charity are sometimes their only trouble. Insofar as this is true, the duties of the welfare agency are simple. Finding a job for the mem-

ber or members of the family who are employable, in the meantime supplying the necessities of life, may be all that is required. More often the economic need is a symptom of social maladjustment. If this is the case, economic assistance will be at best temporary in its effects. If, for example, the husband and father has lost his job through illness or worry or drink, securing another job for him will not solve his problems. He needs to be cured of his illness, relieved of his worry, or provided with an acceptable substitute for drink. Extravagance or poor management on part of the wife cannot be permanently helped by supplying groceries and paying the rent. These problems must be attacked and dealt with directly. The economic difficulty may disappear of itself when the more basic obstacle is removed. Since the physical and mental well-being required by economic activity may be adversely affected by an unsatisfactory family life, family welfare organizations have learned to look at once beneath the surface of destitution for social maladjustments. For the purpose of discovering and dealing with these maladjustments, an elaborate case-work technique has been developed. The complexity of the situations which may be met and the method of approach and treatment require the application of this technique with the utmost skill and intelligence.

#### THE DOMESTIC RELATIONS COURT

If the difficulties of the family do not result in destitution, they will not ordinarily come to the attention of public agencies before the conflict becomes so serious that some member of the family seeks the aid and protection of the law. Most frequently the aid sought is a decree of divorce or separation. Until comparatively recent days, family disputes were dealt with in the ordinary civil and criminal courts of the community. There was no special concern about the family, except as the judge might become individually interested in it. Even then he was often without power under the rules of the court to render the service he recognized as necessary.

To remedy the defect and thereby provide a suitable agency

through which a responsible and wise judge with wide discretionary powers may deal with family maladjustments, domestic relations courts have been established. As yet they are found only in the large centers of population, where numerous cases justify the expense of creating new courts. The domestic relations court operates according to rules of a court of equity. Under this arrangement, the judge may summon and question witnesses, secure evidence or do whatever may be necessary for getting at the facts in the case. He is an interested participant rather than an impartial umpire. Since the proceedings are unlike those of the criminal court, the customary immunities of the individual may be disregarded, and, since this is done in the interest of the individual's own welfare, no injustice results from the procedure.

The usual course of the court in dealing with family maladjustments is to attempt to bring about a mutual understanding and a reconciliation of the conflicting parties. They are summoned to appear in court and give their respective versions of the conflict. The judge then tries to eliminate the points of difference. He may do this by indicating their trivial nature, by persuading the litigants that their demands upon each other are unreasonable, or by any other method he may choose. If he succeeds, the reconciled couple leaves the courtroom to try to get along with each other once more. Sometimes they fail and return to the court. When the efforts of the court to remove the difficulties prove futile, a separation or divorce is decreed. Naturally, there are many such cases, but they are not nearly so numerous as they would be if no attempt was made to bring peace into warring family groups.

#### PREVENTION OF SOCIALLY UNDESIRABLE FAMILIES

Obviously, one of the most promising means of reducing the amount of family disorganization is to prevent the formation of those kinds of families which usually turn out badly. Laws now in force forbidding marriage of paupers and mental defectives could be extended to include other unsocialized persons. Age limits for marriage might be raised in several States;

medical certificates of health might be required of all candidates for marriage. A waiting period of a few days between the issuing of the license and performance of the ceremony will result in many changing their minds before it is too late. An important aid to a program of improvement of marriage through law depends for its success in America upon co-operation among the several States. As long as lax laws are found anywhere in the country, they can be made use of by almost anyone.

To correct this difficulty, a movement for the enactment of a uniform marriage law by the States has been initiated. A uniform divorce law to go with it will make the enforcement of marriage and divorce laws much easier and will get rid of the numerous anomalous and contradictory marriage statutes now existing. The validity of divorce, of separation, and of common-law marriage are matters deserving particular attention.

Certain inherited defects are of so serious a character that their perpetuation through the marriage and reproduction of defective persons is a serious social problem. Unfortunately, laws forbidding marriage are difficult to enforce, especially in cases where the defect, for example, feeble-mindedness, decreases the individual's amenability to social control. To meet this condition, the sterilization of the unfit has been advocated. Numerous States now have laws providing for the sterilization of persons who are unfit to care for families and who are likely to transmit their defects to the children. Where actually put into practice, these laws have been entirely successful. Sterilization is usually readily acceded to by the individual or his guardians. The surgical technique has been advanced to the point where there is little risk attending the operation. It makes possible, in some cases, a family life normal in all respects except as to parenthood.

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## THE CHANGING COMMUNITY

**A**MONG the more conspicuous aspects of the ecological organization of the modern world is its division into rural and urban communities. In communities of primitive people, this distinction was not apparent. The interests of congeniality and the necessities of defense and economic co-operation caused these people to live in villages. Poor techniques of food production and transportation prevented the village from becoming large enough to deserve the name of city. No individual or family lived apart from the group in the manner of the farmers of America. The territory occupied by a primitive people presented, therefore, a uniform succession of small, scattered villages, each more or less like all the others. Specialization in economic production and the development of the means of transportation among civilized peoples led to the formation of trading centers, thereby establishing a functional basis for the city which is still highly important. The tremendous growth of the city in Western countries since about 1800, however, has been due to the appearance of the factory, which depends for its power upon coal, flowing water, or, more recently, oil. The nature of the power at first available necessitated locating the factory near the mine or stream and utilizing power in large units. The railroad, following the factory by three or four decades, freed the city from its dependence upon water transportation and opened up new markets for manufacturers and new sources of food supply. Herein lies the explanation of the growth of the large urban community and the clean-cut distinction which now exists between city and country.

Divergent experiences have built up different cultural characteristics in the two kinds of communities. In some respects these characteristics are antithetical or opposed to each other.

Sorokin and Zimmerman<sup>1</sup> sum up the differences under eight heads as follows: occupation, environment, size of community, density of population, heterogeneity and homogeneity of the population, social differentiation and stratification, mobility, and system of interaction. In accordance with this classification, the inhabitants of the rural world may be described as living close to nature in small communities of relatively low population density. They are comparatively homogeneous in racial and psychosocial traits; class and other distinctions are but slightly developed among them. They remain where they are territorially, occupationally, and socially, interacting with each other personally and frequently. The urban population is quite the reverse of the country population with respect to the traits enumerated.

Although the distinctions between the two groups are clear, there are many persons in the United States who are neither wholly urban nor wholly rural. This is to be expected when it is recalled that practically the entire population is of recent rural origin. Most of the immigrants who have settled in the cities were peasants in Europe, and most of the native-born migrants to the cities have come from the rural sections. Between 1920 and 1930, the migration from farm to city reached a total of about eight millions. In view of the low urban birth rate, it appears that the city will continue indefinitely to secure most of its increase from the country. The result is that a good share of the urban population is continuously in process of transition from a rural to an urban culture. Since the migration from farm to city is usually accomplished in several successive moves from smaller to larger communities, it follows that numerous towns which receive migrants direct from the farm or village regularly lose them to the city before they have become completely urbanized. Such towns will permanently retain a culture of mixed rural and urban elements.

The individual, however, does not usually recognize the dual nature of his make-up, but considers himself either completely rural or completely urban. The prestige of the city induces

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology*, 1929, pp. 56-7.

him to claim the latter if there is the slightest excuse for it. Having left the farm, he also tries to shed the traits which mark him as of rural origin and to acquire the ways of the city dweller. But for this ascendancy of the city culture, it would probably suffer considerably under the impact of the rural elements which it must absorb.

Urban culture is brought to the farm, but through communication rather than through migration. Practically all public communication, including the farm journal, issues from the city and bears the city's stamp. Unquestionably the city, through its control of communication, profoundly influences the country. It is perhaps surprising, therefore, to find such great differences between the two populations. The explanation appears to lie in their divergent economic interests and in the great dissimilarities in the form of the respective communities in which they live.

In the world as a whole, the typical rural section is made up of a series of villages, their size being roughly dependent upon the extent of the area which can be effectively cultivated from a common base. The rural sections of America consist almost entirely of scattered farmsteads, each occupied by a single family. This condition has been the result of several factors, notably the manner of disposing of the public domain. The necessity for actually living on a given piece of land in order to hold it, both before and after the passage of the Homestead Act, tended to encourage if not to compel the formation of the separate farmstead type of community. Another factor is the type of agriculture practiced. Since land was available at first in unlimited quantity, the natural tendency of the farmer was to use as much of it as he could. This led to extensive rather than intensive cultivation, and established the large farm as the unit of operation to which the agricultural system became adapted. When the farm is large, the tiller must live on it in order not to lose too much time in going to and from the fields. Under these circumstances, village life is uneconomical.

The rural village, furthermore, was unsuited to the individualistic attitudes of the American pioneer. Neither the church



nor the state dictated to him. He came and went as he pleased, and too frequently to allow the growth of the sentimental ties which thrive among nonmobile peoples. The net effect has been greatly to increase the isolation of the rural inhabitant and thus to develop in higher degree the kind of individualism which distinguishes him from the city dweller. The differentiation of interests of the two populations has reached the point where they are not only different but actually opposed, so that political, religious, economic, and social questions have a rural and an urban side.

For many years, there has been conflict between city and country over questions of national economic policy. As an example may be mentioned the tariff. The farmers of America have regularly produced large surpluses of crops which must be marketed abroad. In order that foreigners may be able to buy they must also be able to sell, which means they must have access to the American market for their products. Since the products are largely in the form of manufactured goods, American manufacturers object to the admission of foreign goods because of the competition which they bring. The device adopted for shutting out foreign goods or limiting the amount admitted is the tariff or tax on imports. To this the farmers have objected. The issue has been prominent in politics for many years. For a time, both sides were approximately equal in power. However, as the population of the cities increased, in part as the result of early victories over the farmers, the latter lost ground and in recent years have found their foreign market so greatly curtailed that heavy surpluses of farm products have accumulated. Economic ruin as a result of consequent low prices has been the lot of thousands of farmers.

In the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that antagonism exists between the two groups. Their differences are, so to speak, cumulative, and in their totality they constitute a barrier to common understanding and action. Suspicious of each other's motives, traditionally opposed in interest, farm and city in their contacts tend to follow a conflict pattern rather than one of co-operation. The resulting situation constitutes a social

problem of first magnitude. After the widespread want appearing in rural communities during the recent depression had become so serious that it could no longer be ignored by the nation as a whole, some effort was made to improve the lot of the farmer. This effort has taken the form of price-raising through the creation of an artificial scarcity—essentially the procedure of the manufacturing monopolies. Since the procedure is more difficult to apply in agriculture and since the idea underlying it is repugnant to the rural mind, it has not been highly successful. As a permanent agricultural policy it seems both impossible and intolerable.

#### CHANGES IN THE RURAL COMMUNITY

The chief difficulties of the rural community are due, however, not to overt conflict with the city, but rather to rapid internal changes—in some of which, to be sure, the influence of the city has been a factor. Swept into commercial agriculture by the extension of the profit system to the farm, the farmer has suffered all the disadvantages and secured few of the benefits. An understanding of the ensuing difficulties is to be found in an examination of fundamental differences between the present farm community and that of the recent past. We note that as long as good, cheap land was available the rural population of the country as a whole continued to increase rapidly, though relatively less rapidly than the urban population. The momentum of the movement to the land carried people westward for some years after the land was gone. Most of the good homesteads were occupied by 1890, yet hopeful settlers continued to “take up claims” for twenty years afterward. The result, in portions of the rural area, was an excess population trying to make a living by crop production on land not suitable for cultivation. The brief expansion of American agriculture during the World War aggravated this condition.

We note, further, that the total amount of farm product has increased more rapidly than the farm population, especially since about 1890, presumably owing to the improvements in

methods of agriculture and to the increased use of machinery. In some areas, even with an increased product, the population has declined; in others, especially in certain parts of the East—and more recently in the Plains area also, where the land is poorly suited to farming—there has been wholesale abandonment of farms with all but complete depopulation of the region. At present, the farm population of America appears about to become stationary as to numbers. Since the difference between the birth rate and the death rate has always been greater in rural areas than in urban, the low rate of increase in the former as compared with the high rate in the latter indicates a movement of people from country to city. Such a movement has, of course, existed ever since the beginning of the city as a form of human community. According to the calculations of O. E. Baker of the United States Department of Agriculture, quoted by Brunner and Kolb,<sup>2</sup> the cities gained 5,898,000 persons by immigration from the country from 1920 to 1930. During the years 1930, 1931, and 1932, the movement was temporarily reversed, returning to its normal direction in 1933. Most of the people who are moving to the cities are drawn from the actual farm population, leaving the rural nonfarm population practically stationary. The village population of America, once believed about to be swallowed up by the city, has shown a tendency to increase since about 1930.<sup>3</sup>

Owing to the different migratory tendencies of sex and age groups, the country population has become abnormal with respect to these characteristics. Young adults of both sexes, but more particularly young women, are attracted to the city. The rural population, in consequence, contains a much larger proportion of children and old persons than that of the city. In the young adult group of the farm population, which is mostly affected by migration, there is a large excess of males. The low-income tenant class, as a whole, contributes more persons to the city drift than does the higher-income owner

<sup>2</sup> *Rural Social Trends*, 1935, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Brunner, Edmund deS., and Lorge, I., *Rural Trends in Depression Years, 1937*, pp. 66-7.

group. Migration from the latter seems to be limited to those whose educational opportunities offer them a chance to enter a profession in the city.

### RURAL MOBILITY

Compared with urban populations rural dwellers show a low mobility, yet compared with farmers of a generation or more ago they have become highly mobile.<sup>4</sup> Good roads and the motor car have multiplied the radius of visiting and shopping areas by five and have greatly increased the number of trips taken for such purposes. Long trips, in the nature of vacation tours, are now frequently undertaken by farmers. This kind of travel was unheard of before the day of the automobile. It should not be forgotten, however, that the benefits of good roads have not come to the rural districts in anything like so generous a measure as they have come to the towns and cities. Persons living in cities can travel in any direction on a good road leading to another city. A farmer may be so fortunate as to live beside such a road. If he does, it is purely a matter of accident. More than likely he lives several miles from the good road on a road not always good and sometimes barely passable. For a long journey, a few miles of poor road make no difference; the short trip to a neighbor's house may be prevented entirely. It is rarely, therefore, that the paved highway serves in any way to bring the members of the farm community closer together. To visit his neighbor the farmer usually has to traverse roads much inferior to those indicated in the road maps used by transcontinental tourists. It has thus become relatively more difficult for the farmer to reach the people in his own neighborhood than to go to town. How much this fact may have been involved in rural community disorganization it is impossible to measure, but that it has had some effect may be reasonably inferred.

As a result of the availability of the large town or city to the rural population, the country village has lost some of its

<sup>4</sup> See Willey, Malcolm M., and Rice, Stuart A., *Communication Agencies and Social Life*, 1933.

functions as a trading center. At the same time it has gained certain social functions once served by country store, church, or schoolhouse located in the open country. The village has become more and more the meeting place of farmers and, incidentally, of farmers and villagers, thereby bringing these two groups culturally much closer together than they formerly were. They are thus enabled to co-operate, although so far ineffectually, in the solution of their ever-increasing economic problems.

#### COMMUNICATION

Although the rural community has suffered loss from the decline of the rural neighborhood, modern changes have brought some compensations. The rural free delivery service brings mail and mail-order merchandise to about seven million farm families. Daily deliveries make it practical for farmers to subscribe to daily papers. The rural telephone, now found on one farm in three, unites the farmer not only with his neighbor but with other telephone subscribers the world over. The radio programs available to him are the same as those offered to city dwellers. The net effect of these and other improvements in communication has been similar to the effects in the city; the farmer has become more cosmopolitan in his outlook.

#### CHANGES IN THE CITY

Judging from the readiness with which people have flocked to the cities throughout historic times, we may suppose that human beings live in the city from choice and in the country only from necessity. Yet it is only within the past hundred years that the city has been even reasonably safe to live in. Since its very beginning, the city has been full of dangers of various kinds, which have wrought such destruction among its people that a constant stream of immigrants from the country has been necessary to fill the vacancies left by the deceased. The dangers of city life seem never to have deterred the migrants more than temporarily. In modern times, the city has greatly lowered its death rate and consequently requires a

smaller number of recruits from the country to fill its ranks. The effect of the change, however, has not been a cessation of the movement from the country to the city, but rather an unprecedented increase in the urban population. The selective factors operating in migration have brought to the city the best and the worst of rural youth, ready to go to work without preliminary expense to the community. Though they are not well educated, such education as they have, together with the cost of bringing them through the expensive years of childhood, has been paid for from the proceeds of farming. Some of them, moreover, bring from the farm small legacies, amounting in the aggregate to a large sum, to add to the already heavy accumulation of wealth in the city.

#### SANITATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Most conspicuous among the changes which have tended to reduce the risk of living in the city is the development of the techniques of sanitation and public health. Practically all the changes classifiable under this heading have taken place in comparatively recent times. Covered sewers appeared in London in 1531, but were not in general use for centuries later. Prior to the building of sewers flushed by an abundance of water, the disposal of waste presented an almost insoluble problem to the city. So common was the practice of throwing all kinds of refuse into the street that passage was often both difficult and hazardous. Personal cleanliness under these conditions could be achieved only by the well-to-do, and it seems to have been rare even among them. From what we now know of the nature of epidemic diseases, it is clear that the cities of a hundred years ago or earlier presented ideal conditions for the continuous existence of such diseases. To combat them, the people practiced witchcraft and built bonfires in the public square to purify the atmosphere.

Public health techniques have been devised and applied only within the past generation or two. Many of the scientific discoveries upon which they are based have been made by men still living. Yet so complete has been the change that cities

all over the world have been transformed from filthy, disease-ridden communities to marvels of cleanliness and health, where the death rates are scarcely, if any, higher than those of the surrounding rural areas.

### PEACE AND WAR

The concentration of wealth and of political domination in the city has tended to make it the objective of military activities throughout its entire history. The changed techniques of war following the invention of artillery contributed greatly to the security of life and property in the city. No longer was the city wall made to serve as a fort to withstand the batterings of the enemy's cannon. Because this kind of resistance proved ineffective, the lines of defense were moved farther out and the opposing army was met at some distance from the main centers of population. Under this system, the actual occupation of the cities by the conquerors was accompanied with but little fighting. The systematic pillage and destruction characteristic of ancient warfare is no longer practiced. Possibly this is in part the result of the development of humanitarianism, but more likely it is due to a changed conception of the economic objectives of war. A ruined city is of little use to anybody, whereas a city captured intact may be made to yield tribute in the form of tax levies.

The wars of the last decade, however, indicate that still further change in military methods is taking place, and that the security of the city is seriously threatened. Modern transportation and communication have led to such perfection of organization that war can be waged as an activity of the whole population, including civilians as well as armed forces. The demoralization or destruction of the civilian population has therefore become a military objective; and the bomb-dropping airplane has been developed as the appropriate weapon. The evacuation of urban centers under threat of aerial bombardment has already been carried out in large-scale fashion. If war does not cease or again change its methods, life in the modern city may regress to the insecurity of the ancient walled town.

## BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

The necessity of providing space to permit greater densities of population led early in the history of cities to the erection of houses with more than one story. The greater difficulty of vertical movement, of stair-climbing as compared with walking on a level floor, limited the height of buildings for business or dwelling purposes to five or six stories. The effective use of higher levels was made possible only after the invention of the elevator, which occurred about the middle of the nineteenth century. The limits upon the height of buildings thereupon shifted to those imposed by the nature of the materials used in their construction. Wood, besides presenting a serious fire hazard, did not lend itself to the building of skyscrapers. Masonry buildings could reach a height of ten or twelve stories. Beyond this height, the required thickness of the lower walls was so great as to allow but little room for occupancy. The steel structure surmounted this difficulty and permitted the erection of buildings fifty stories or more in height. The transportation of the numerous occupants of a high building to the upper floors requires many elevators. These have been speeded up considerably, but in spite of their speed so many are needed that the occupiable space on the lower floors is greatly reduced. Moreover, the changes in atmospheric pressure encountered in passing rapidly from the top of the building to its base have unpleasant consequences for many people. Until new techniques are developed, it appears that further increases in the height of buildings actually to be occupied are impracticable.

## TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The success of the skyscraper has led to the necessity for providing better street transportation. The wide, straight, paved street, the light carriage, the horse car, the electric street car, the bicycle, the automobile, the elevated railway, and the subway represent important steps in the development of street travel. The last two mentioned involve the utilization of the



third dimension for street purposes. The several changes have been accompanied by a greatly increased speed of the vehicles used, and have permitted an increasingly greater density and size of the city population. The problem of feeding the people of the city has been met not only through cheap and fast transportation, but also through improved techniques for preserving perishable foods.

Coincident with the development of transportation have appeared marvelous advances in the means of long distance communication. Until within the past hundred years, communication was no more rapid than transportation. Before the invention of the steam locomotive, the horse provided the fastest mode of travel and of sending messages. With the invention of the electric telegraph in 1836, communication outstripped transportation. Subsequent inventions have improved telegraphy and added telephony. For certain purposes, the use of connecting wires has been rendered unnecessary. We have now reached the stage where practically every part of the civilized world can communicate almost instantaneously with every other part. The cost of communication over great distances still prevents its general use by individuals for their private affairs, but fortunately there is little need for such communication except in emergencies. The development of communication and of transportation has, of course, profoundly affected the social and economic life of the whole world, but more particularly that of the large city. It has made possible the maintenance of a world-wide economic organization, a world-wide commerce, and a food supply for the inhabitants of the metropolis.

Other important results have followed the practically complete disappearance of illiteracy and the enormous increase in the circulation of newspapers and magazines. Through the newspaper, the urban resident keeps closely in touch with the events of his community and thereby readily identifies himself as a participant in its complex life. As private conversation and gossip kept the villager of the past "on the inside" of com-

munity affairs, so the modern newspaper helps the city dweller to become and remain a part of the city.

### MOBILITY AND FLUIDITY

Since he is no longer dependent upon personal acquaintance for the source of his information and for his connection with the community, the resident of the city has few spatial ties. He is as much a member of the city in one part of it as in another. This factor, together with others, has facilitated the development of the high mobility and fluidity now characteristic of the urban population. Although this condition would seem in many respects to increase the efficiency of the individual, it is believed by many to constitute a serious social problem.

The combined effect of all these changes has been to produce the metropolis with its huge, dense population, held together by intricate systems of transportation and communication. The environment has changed from one consisting largely of natural objects to one consisting largely of artifacts and men. The neighborliness of the old village is gone, its place taken by the touch-and-go contacts of strangers. To this new way of life man has brought a set of folkways developed through ages of simple, primary-group living. It is the failure of these folkways to adjust themselves easily to the new situation which makes the city a place of contradiction and of conflict for many of its residents.

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## THE EFFECTS OF CHANGE IN RURAL AREAS

**A**MONG the rural communities of America may be found wide differences of fundamental character. Such differences as race, religion, and nature of farming operations serve to differentiate the communities of one section rather sharply from those of another. When generalizations are made about the rural population, therefore, exceptions are readily discovered. Probably few statements can be made about American farmers which will be true of all of them. This fact must be borne in mind in the following discussion of rural problems, which necessarily does not take into account all the instances in which the generalizations do not apply. However, the treatment of the rural areas of the United States as a whole is justifiable on the ground of the similarity of their social and economic problems. They have been subjected to the same difficulties of making a living, the same demoralizing effects of urbanization, the same repressions of isolation. Although by no means so much alike as the members of a class in the urban population, the rural inhabitants at least have their troubles in common. Their common lot has given them a set of attitudes recognizable as the rural mind, which is practically the same whether it is observed in the corn belt or in the cotton belt, in the orchards of California or in the potato fields of Maine.

### ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CITY

Among the more conspicuous attitudes present in the rural mind is an antagonism toward the city and all that it stands for. The farmer feels that he is being exploited by the city. He works long hours at hard labor and receives little for doing so. The city dweller enjoys a shorter work day and better pay.

Since the work of the city is not productive of food, it appears to the farmer to be nothing more than a systematic process of fleecing the rural people out of their hard-won earnings and products. The farmer protests and in so doing reveals one of the numerous difficulties with which the rural community has to contend. For the protests of the farmer are sporadic, individual, unorganized and, usually, futile.

Until recently, the inhabitants of rural villages considered themselves affronted by the farmer's anticity attitudes, thus drawing to themselves a large measure of his disapproval. Apparently every country town or crossroads settlement saw in itself a potential metropolis, humming with industry and bustling with commerce. Overlooked was the present dependence of its people upon the crops and trade of the surrounding countryside. The village tended, therefore, to take up the quarrel between the country and the city and to side strongly with the city. The expensive lessons of the economic depression in agriculture beginning shortly after the close of the World War have taught many villagers the error of their ways. The disastrous effects upon village business caused by the failure of farming have led to a realization by the village of the fact that its interests are closely identified with those of the farmer. A rapprochement between village and farm is now in evidence. In many cases, village business men's organizations include farmers, and both classes of members work together for their mutual good. But old habits are resistant; conflicts between village and farm based upon the city aspirations of the former still appear from time to time.

Collectively, the rural population has a monopoly in the production of food and the raw materials for clothing. These products fill a need for which there are no substitutes, though the time when such substitutes will be found seems to be approaching. The farmers, however, have never for any extended period succeeded in securing for themselves the economic advantages of monopoly control. They recognize the possibilities, but they cannot realize them. Originally, the overwhelming majority of the rural population in the nation gave

the farmers undisputed political control and with it the power to determine the economic policy of the government. Lack of effective organization prevented their using this control to the fullest advantage, but the loss of their power has nonetheless proved a serious handicap. Although steadily gaining in numbers, the farm population has gradually decreased in proportion to the city population. The actual loss of majority took place between 1910 and 1920, during which time the rural portion of the population, as measured by the census, fell from 54.2 per cent to 48.6 per cent. The loss of political control, however, took place immediately after the Civil War. This may be explained as due to the smaller proportion of voters in the rural population, the larger proportion of old, inactive people, the higher proportion of illiteracy, and the poorer facilities for communication and transportation, which render political participation difficult.

Social isolation has made the farmer suspicious of outsiders, unwilling to trust those whom he does not personally know. In any attempt at large-scale organization the rural population is therefore handicapped. Farmers do not respond readily to leadership, probably because so many of the would-be leaders among them have come from the city. The rural community itself seems to produce leaders only rarely.

The scarcity of leaders is probably due to the magnetism of the city, which has offered golden rewards to able young men and women from the country. Since the days of Dick Whittington, farm boys of talent have turned their faces toward the city. Although we cannot state the result of this long-continued drain in statistical terms, it is fair to conclude that the amount of capable leadership in the country has been much reduced in the process.

#### ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF CHANGE

It is not greatly to be regretted that farmers have not succeeded in controlling the supply and the price of the products which they provide for the city. Such successful co-operation would have had undesirable consequences for all nonfarmers.

It is to be regretted, however, that the farmers have lost a great deal of the independence which characterized their mode of life a few generations ago. The development of transportation opened up the markets of the world to the farm; the development of manufacturing presented the farmers with an endless variety of objects to buy. The inevitable result has been to develop specialized farming, in which all the land and effort are devoted to the production of a money crop, the proceeds of which are then used to purchase some of the numerous articles offered for sale in town.

It is probable that this system has resulted in the average farmer having more goods to consume than he had under a system of self-sufficient agriculture, but there have arisen difficult problems of income as well. In the first place, it has turned the farmer over to the mercy of the economic system, a powerful force over which he has no more control than he has over the weather. Such control as is exercised appears to come from the city and to be directed in ways quite contrary to the interests of the farmer. Appreciating his dependence upon the whims of the city folk, the farmer has developed a profound feeling of inferiority in comparison with them. Secondly, his participation in the modern economic system of exchange has had adverse effects upon his income. He has become subject to the effects of economic crises and depressions. In recent decades, the amount of mortgage indebtedness borne by the farmer of America has increased much more rapidly than his income. His taxes have become greater and greater. Even if economic conditions in general are good, he may have a failure in the crop upon which he has come to depend, or the total supply may be so large that the market price will not pay the costs of production.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, consumers may change their

<sup>1</sup>In 1927 the average farmer in the milk shed of Chicago, for the labor of his whole family and an investment on a twelve thousand dollar farm plant, received about twenty-seven dollars a week. The member of the milk wagon drivers' union in the city, for working eight hours a day, received fifty dollars a week plus commission. A government audit of the companies which distributed to the city consumer revealed that during the first three years of the depression they made a 25 per cent return on their investment. (From Holt, Arthur E., *The Fate of the Family in the Modern World*, pp. 63-4. Chicago: Willett, Clark & Company, 1936.)

habits of food consumption so that the farmer must change the type of his product, often at great expense.

The one-crop system, with its uncertain returns coming in a short period once a year, tends to undermine whatever thrift habits the farmer may have had. Savings are impossible without careful planning and a regular income received at reasonably short intervals. No sensible budgeting can be attempted under other conditions. The farm family cannot live within its means when, as is often the case, it has not the remotest knowledge of what its means will be. Out of this situation is likely to develop an attitude of hopelessness, which manifests itself in orgies of spending during the rare times of plenty and in reckless borrowing during the long months of no income. In many instances farmers become so deeply involved in debt that they can never escape. The farm is not able to retain even its small accumulations without paying toll to the city. If a farmer's son purchases the family farm and stays on it while his brothers move to the city, he will find it necessary to pay them for their share of the estate. Obviously, the brothers take the money with them to their city homes.

A good farm represents an investment of many years of toil and a large accumulation of capital. It is manifestly too heavy a drain upon rural resources for each succeeding generation of farmers to pay a large part of the total value of their farms to the heirs who leave the community. The attempt to make the farm produce the cash required causes neglect of permanent improvements, with the result that the farm loses most of its capacity for production. The end of the road is marked by a lowered standard of living in the rural community. When the small and uncertain income of the farmer does not at once cause him to give up the attempt to become a land-owner, it may turn him and his family into hopeless toilers. Especially among certain foreign groups, motivated by a strong desire to possess land, is this likely to take place. Sometimes the welfare of the whole family may be sacrificed to the attainment of this goal. Even if partially successful, the price is too high to pay. To acquire farm ownership is in itself a laudable purpose, but when its



by-product is a pair of tired, worn-out parents and a group of ignorant children, all hating the farm for its cruel exactions and finding no pleasure in life, the purchase of a farm is a grave error.

#### TENANCY

Despite all this, it is generally accepted as ideal for the farmer to own the land he tills. If he rents the land or works it for wages, a good deal of the advantage of farming as a way of life disappears. He is no longer his own master; he must share the product of his labor with the landlord or employer, so that as a rule what he receives amounts to but little. He must accept orders and directions as to the farming processes, and cannot determine when and how they are to be carried on. His lack of ownership is apt to reduce greatly his efforts to keep up the fertility of the soil and the repair of the farm buildings. Although he may recognize the desirability of conserving the soil and keeping the barns painted, he cannot afford the necessary expenditure, especially in view of the possibility that next year he may be occupying a different farm.

From the point of view of the community, the frequent moving of the tenant is decidedly harmful. Persons who have recently come to the community and who expect to leave shortly cannot become interested in schools, churches, or other activities requiring support year after year. Their comparatively low incomes make it difficult for them to live as well as do the owners, and consequently social distance, with class distinctions, often develops between owner groups and renter groups. The latter, when long accustomed to a low income, may finally accept a lower standard of living as satisfactory, so that even considerable increases in income will not induce them to live better.

In view of these consequences, it is easy to understand why some alarm has been felt concerning the continuing increase of farm tenancy in the United States. More than two fifths of all farms in this country are now operated by tenants. In some of the Southern States, the proportion of rented farms is as high

as three fifths of the total. Apparently, there is a definite trend in the direction of more tenancy. To some extent, tenancy status is a preliminary step on the road to ownership, and insofar as this is the case it should probably be encouraged. Most of the numerous instances in which the tenant is related to the landlord are doubtless in this class. For the most part, however, tenancy is becoming a permanent system, and the tenants are spending their whole lives as tenants, hopelessly in poverty, moving about from farm to farm, bequeathing to their children nothing but ill-fed, poorly developed bodies, a little elementary education, and a sense of failure. The only good thing that may be said of the situation is that if farms were not available for the large population of tenants, many more of them would be on relief than is now the case.

So serious and widespread has become the problem of the landless farmer, especially since 1930, that it is recognized as one of the major concerns of the Federal government. About one and one third million families, of a total of three millions, have been reduced to so low a state that they cannot possibly be expected to help themselves. Many of these live on land so poor that it will not return the expenses of cultivation. The problem is most acute in the South, but it is by no means absent in the North and West.

The low income level of tenant and cropper farmers on Southern plantations is illustrated in a study of 645 plantations representing over 5,000 families, made by the Works Progress Administration. The average net plantation income above current cash operating expenses was found to be \$110 per capita—actual figures varied from \$127 to \$89. On 12 plantations in the lower Mississippi Delta the annual net income averaged \$46 per person.<sup>2</sup>

Within the past few years, the tenant's position has been made even more precarious by the increasing mechanization of farm operations. It is evident that the low prices received by farmers tend to encourage rather than discourage the adoption

<sup>2</sup> United States National Resources Committee, *Farm Tenancy, Report of the President's Committee*, 1937, p. 57.

of machine methods of agriculture. In certain cotton-growing sections, hand cultivation has been dispensed with and even the harvesting of the crop is being done mechanically. Tractors have already driven thousands of farmers off the land and into the city. The same may be said of the shoe factory, the canning plant, and the textile mill, all of which for many years have been transferring the locus of former farm occupations from the rural to the urban community.

#### SOCIAL EFFECTS OF CHANGE

If the low income of the American farmer had no other effects than to require him to eat poor food, to wear unstylish clothing, and to live in a house devoid of every modern convenience, it might well be endured, but these conditions are productive of others even more serious in their effect upon human welfare. They enter in, along with isolation and the loss of leaders, as factors in the deterioration of social life on the farm. Not more than two generations have passed since the rural areas were self-sufficient in their recreational activities. The farmers of that day did not need the assistance of the commercial amusement enterprises of the city to give them good times. A varied repertory of games in which all could participate furnished the framework for the social gathering. The question of what to do did not long remain unanswered; the host and hostess did not have to plan entertainment. The singing school and the literary society gave opportunity for the individual to express himself and even to achieve a limited distinction. There were still fish in the streams and game in the woods. Work was made into play by the device of parties assembled for nut-gathering, berrypicking, cornhusking, or quilting. Even such heavy labor as threshing and building was accompanied by appropriate celebrations.

The coming of good roads and the automobile led to a great change in rural recreation. Instead of enlarging the scope and increasing the frequency of community activities, improved means of transportation merely brought about more frequent contact with the city. Under the influence of the city, country

people have learned to consider their own forms of recreation as unfashionable and crude. The social leaders of the country have been among the first to adopt the new point of view. Once begun, the movement to give up the old ways of amusement has proceeded rapidly. Rural recreation required co-operation and skill of all the participants. The lack of practice resulting from less frequent gatherings has made it difficult to carry on the older forms of play, even with the desire to do so. Consequently, group play has in many communities given way to the modern dance, which requires less skill and co-operation and which may be conducted by groups of couples who are not acquainted with each other at all.

Unhappily, from the point of view of recreational opportunity, the substitution of city amusements for those native to the country has not taken place without considerable friction. The puritanical attitude which looks upon certain of the pleasures of life as sinful has retained its strength in the rural regions to a remarkable degree. Where this attitude is at its strongest, it may so completely dominate social life as to permit no organized recreation at all. Having given up the old forms, for which tolerance had been developed, the people have found themselves unable to reconcile the new forms with their religious beliefs. Since the opposition has been most frequently voiced by the elders, it has given rise to conflict between the younger and older groups in the community. The young folks, being somewhat more mobile, have been subjected to greater influences from the city than their parents, and, being younger, have no memories of other, different days to offset these influences. Such leaders as the young people have are likely to join forces with the new as against the old. They definitely favor the introduction of the ways of the city. If the elders prevail in the conflict, the young people may desert the field and take to the city, where they can do as they please. If the young folks win, the community is divided against itself, a condition which precludes its functioning satisfactorily, especially where the group is so small that the co-operation of all is necessary to successful recreational activity.

## RURAL DELINQUENCY

Although rural communities are almost entirely free from organized crime, many of them have a considerable amount of juvenile delinquency. A large part of it is unrecorded, because the rural law-enforcement agencies are not prepared to deal with it effectively. Furthermore, the victims of delinquent behavior in the country are reluctant to make complaints. In spite of these limitations upon our knowledge, we realize that delinquency is becoming a serious problem in rural life. In attempting to explain its existence, we are struck by the correlation between the extent of juvenile delinquency and the lack of recreation. Boys are determined to engage in some form of play, and if the community does not provide socially approved and supervised recreation they will devise play activities for themselves. It is only by good luck that such play escapes being socially disapproved and thus adjudged delinquent. Undoubtedly, a large portion of rural juvenile delinquency could be prevented by the introduction of adequate recreational programs in rural communities.

## DECAY OF THE RURAL CHURCH

The rural community is the stronghold of fundamentalism. Ever since the days of first settlement, religion has had a large place in the lives of American farm folk. The church in the established rural communities of fifty years ago was the most important local institution, serving secular as well as religious needs. It dominated the social life of the community as the guardian of the mores and the determiner of individual behavior. It gave opportunity for social life both in the form of visiting and gossiping at the regular Sunday morning service and in the form of separate social functions sponsored by the church. By permitting an exchange of news and opinion, it served to unite the members of the locality into a genuine community.

It is therefore not surprising that many observers have noted with misgivings the decay of the rural church. The change

does not appear to be due to decay or loss of religious belief so much as to factors which prevent community co-operation or render churchgoing unattractive. Under the former division may be mentioned the development of sectarianism. Although predominantly Protestant, the farmers of America are by no means agreed upon what to believe. The excess of zeal which has always characterized their religious expression and the individualism generated by isolation have led them into schisms over apparently nonessential details of creed. The duplication of churches and preachers necessitated by the presence of several sects in the same community has robbed the church of its dominance and made of it a factor causing dissension rather than one fostering general co-operation. Moreover, the costs of maintaining numerous church buildings and paying the salaries of numerous clergymen has in many instances proved too heavy a burden. The result has been infrequent services held in an inadequate, unkept church by an underpaid and, consequently, inefficient preacher. Often the preacher is a beginner; sometimes he is too old for really active work; or he is a man making a living at farming and preaching only as an avocation. With services coming only once a month, people easily fall out of the habit of attending church, or forget which Sunday to go. A service with only a handful in attendance is hardly inspiring, no matter how eloquent the minister.

Other factors tending to divide the community also have adverse effects upon the church. As the frontier conditions of approximate economic equality disappear, the rural community becomes differentiated into land-owning and renting groups, sometimes with several grades of each. The differences in income are soon reflected in differences in culture, which form the ultimate basis of class distinctions. The inability of the upper and the lower classes to co-operate in the maintenance of a church often means that there will be no church at all, since neither group is numerous enough to support the institution by itself. In a few localities, racial and nationalistic differences prevent community action in matters of religion. Whites cannot get along in the same church with Negroes;

neither group can get along with Mexicans. Diverse linguistic elements usually find it impossible to attend services together. Only when one group includes a large part of the population of a given community can it successfully maintain organized religious activity.

Finally must be mentioned the effect of the nearness of the city upon the rural church. The car and the paved road have made it possible for many farmers to attend city churches. In town the church building is more attractive, the congregation is larger, the service more impressive, and the preacher more able. Well-to-do farmers with strong religious interests usually take advantage of these opportunities, thereby depriving the rural church of its natural leadership. The followers who are left must carry on the church enterprise as well as they can by themselves. One of the consequences is the springing up in many rural communities of new religious groups. The typical service of such groups is an informal, undignified, emotional exercise, presided over by an untrained preacher, for whom preaching is only a part-time occupation. It is evident that, when conducted on this level, religion falls short of giving the participants the values which they have a right to expect from it.

### THE RURAL SCHOOL

Much of what has been said about the rural church applies also to the rural school. Social cleavages prevent community co-operation; the small size of the school prevents the attainment of efficiency at a cost within the reach of the community. The all-embracing duties of the teacher do not allow her to do any of them well, and the pay is not high enough to attract the best teachers. Laboratory equipment is all but unheard of; libraries are often too limited to be of much value. The school building is usually unattractive inside and out. Improvement is difficult, for the large number of children in proportion to the population and the poverty of the community make the establishment of a first-class school system impossible on account of the expense. In sections where child labor is

utilized during the school year, attendance is often seriously affected during the work period. Bad weather and poor roads also keep the pupils at home more or less. In all rural areas, the children attend school less regularly than do the children of the cities. Where tenancy is well developed and especially where the tenants are of a different race from that of the landowners, short school terms are the rule. Since the landowners pay most of the taxes, they are opposed to large expenditures for schools which benefit chiefly the children of landless renters. The tenants themselves are often too ignorant to utilize to the best advantage even the poor educational opportunities available to them.

#### THE RURAL SCHOOL AS A COMMUNITY CENTER

In many rural communities, the school was formerly the center about which the secular life of the whole population revolved. Here met the debating society, the singing school, and the Grange. Here were held "programs" and entertainments. Often where sectarianism had broken down the strength of the church, the school served as the common ground where everyone in the community could meet on equal terms. This, too, has largely passed. The "little red schoolhouse," undeservedly praised in poetry and oratory, continues to function, because no substitute has been found, but it is far from meeting the requirements of a good education for the farm child. The answer to the question, unfortunately, is not to be found in the elimination of the one-room schoolhouse. The educational efficiency of the school is usually raised by consolidation, but often the disappearance of the school from the community removes the last remaining form of social organization and leaves the community with no internal ties whatever.

#### PROGRAMS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF RURAL LIFE

The failure of the modern farm community to give a satisfactory life to its residents has not remained entirely unnoticed. A large number of persons, most of them living in the city,



have become concerned about the welfare of the farmer and have proposed remedies. The more important of the suggested remedies may be classified under the general heading of community organization. Their object is to restore the primary group associations of the farm population. To this end are recommended a number of devices for reuniting the scattered remnants of the old farm neighborhood. Most of them favor the establishment of a local institution in which everyone can participate, the expectation being that all the community activities will subsequently group themselves around the institution. The kind of institution recommended depends upon the viewpoint of the promoter. If the decay of the community is ascribed to a lack of religion, the establishment of a community church is proposed as the remedy. If the farmer's troubles are attributed to poor education, the consolidated school or the rural high school may be offered as a solution. If recreation is regarded as a desideratum, a centrally located hall with appropriate organizations may be advocated. This plan favors the restoration of the old activities of singing, debating, and group games, with many new ones added, such as athletics, dramatics, contests, and movies. In the few communities where these attempts at reorganization have been tried, they have had some success. That they have not been more generally attempted may be due to lack of leadership and to the fact that the suggestion has more often than not come from someone outside the community. The individualistic American farmer does not relish being told by an outsider, particularly a city man, how to run his neighborhood affairs.

This fact largely accounts for the complete failure of a second variety of programs for the improvement of rural life. This movement is characterized by a species of propaganda designed to raise the status of the farmer and his occupation. The farmer is told in superlative terms of the advantages of living in the country. There is to be found freedom from the hurry of the city, freedom from time clocks and wage slavery, and the satisfaction that comes only from

genuinely creative effort. The country affords fresh air and sunshine, wholesome exercise, abundant food, and consequently health and strength. It provides the civilizing influence of association with animals and the beauties of nature. Many of the nation's great men have come from the farm and owe their greatness to this circumstance. Farm boys and girls make a mistake when they leave all this behind to seek an uncertain fortune in the city. "Back to the farm" is the slogan of the movement that is intended to restore the decaying countryside and enable the nation to retain its high place in the world.

The average farmer who hears talk of this sort will either disregard it or resent it. He may think it is the prattle of people with good intentions and little knowledge. More than likely, however, his skeptical turn of mind will suggest to him that it is propaganda sent forth by his exploiters to make him contented with his poor lot. To him country life is not the blissful idyll pictured in the magazines. He may be grateful for the sunshine, unless the crops need rain, but he can hardly help recalling that all but the poorest in the city have running water in their kitchens and electric lights in their parlors. His supposed freedom to work when and as he pleases gives him but little comfort; the goad of the unpaid mortgage may be quite as hard to endure as the worst factory overseer.

From the farmer's viewpoint, his troubles are to a large extent economic. He recognizes the shortcomings of his life in the way of recreation, religion, and education, but he feels that the opportunity for securing all of these is at hand, if only he had the money to pay for them. His own programs of improvement have therefore taken the form of attempts to make farming more profitable. The co-operative movement, in all its varied manifestations, represents the wish of farmers to secure for themselves the advantages of large-scale buying and selling, and in a few instances to determine the prices of their products through the exercise of monopoly control. Except in the matter of monopoly control, the co-operative move-

ment has been highly successful. Many a farm community has raised its cultural standards by means of the increased income resulting from the introduction and utilization of co-operative marketing associations or other co-operative enterprises. Numerous nation-wide organizations, including the Grange, the Farmers' Alliance, the Wheel, and the Farmers' Union, have grown up as exponents of co-operation, and many of the co-operative undertakings have themselves become regional in scope.

Realizing the economic importance of political control, farmers have made some effort to secure legislation favorable to their interests, and so-called third-party movements in America have usually been of rural origin. The Grange reached the peak of its power about 1875. This organization did not nominate candidates for office; it merely approved of those favorable to agriculture. The Grange, therefore, had little success in the elections, but its influence on farm welfare was far-reaching. Much of the legislation which it advocated for the benefit of agriculture has been enacted. The Populist Party of 1892 was essentially a farmers' political movement. It was too short-lived to accomplish much. The career of the Non-Partisan League in the Middle West is the finest example of the agrarian political organization. Like its predecessors, it failed to hold its early gains. Since about 1920, the hopes of the farmers in general have been upheld by the farm bloc in Congress. This group consists of representatives in Congress, regardless of party lines, who come from rural constituencies and who recognize that their own interests are closely allied with the interests of the people they represent. Much of the legislation favorable to farmers, beginning with the creation of the Federal Farm Board, has been passed through the efforts of the farm bloc. As an example may be given the farm extension program, under the leadership of the Department of Agriculture, which is doing much to make farm life more attractive and profitable. The 4-H clubs organized by the Farm Extension Service reach over a million rural boys and girls.

The inherent conservatism of the farmer, however, together

with his inability to compromise his differences, no matter how trifling, have militated against his chances of improvement by way of political control. As time goes on and the farmers become less and less important numerically, their political power is certain to decrease. It is scarcely likely that they will learn to band together any better in the future than they have in the past. Aid in the form of national economic policy will come to the farmer only after a realization by the urban population of the importance to national welfare of a happy and thriving rural community.

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## CHANGE IN THE URBAN COMMUNITY

THE history of the city is the history of civilization. The city and civilization have appeared, grown, flourished, and decayed together ever since the activities of men have been recorded. This is true in spite of the fact that the functions of the city have changed greatly during the historical period. The earliest human grouping large enough to be called a city seems to have served mainly as a means of defense. Walls, stockades, moats, or other barriers marked the boundaries of these ancient cities and secured their inhabitants against the attacks of their enemies. As commerce and manufacturing appeared, these functions were added to the city, and as they grew the city grew. In modern times, the city has practically lost its significance as a means of defense, but it has gained vastly in importance as a center of trade and a seat of manufacturing. For reasons of convenience, such other functions as government, recreation, and education have been also attracted to the city.

With these changes in the rôle of the city in society have come profound changes in the life of the individual city dweller. The spectacular increase in the populations of cities during the last century and the infinite multiplication of specialties in occupation have necessitated numerous contacts with strangers. The frequent accidental meetings of friends and acquaintances so characteristic of village life are almost unknown in the city. Even when an acquaintanceship is struck up, it is likely to be partial, revealing only a single small sector of the other's personality. One may know some of his fellow workers, but his knowledge of them does not often extend beyond those traits which are manifested in the work room. In a settled, small community the individual becomes ac-

quainted with those who live near him; in the city he seldom sees his neighbors. They are swallowed up in the flood of moving humanity as soon as they leave their own doorsteps, and remain unrecognizable human units until their return. Furthermore, they change their residences so frequently that there is insufficient time to permit the development of acquaintance, not to mention friendship.

The disappearance of primary contacts among persons of the same locality marks the end of the neighborhood as a form of human association. The satisfactions of informal conversation, visiting, and playing are denied to the anonymous dwellers in city apartments. A mutual suspicion which only time and intimate acquaintance can allay keeps even the most lonely persons apart and prevents their enjoying each other's company. The city, moreover, is a region of great differences in wealth, culture, and general social background. These factors create social distance by stratifying the population into classes. Communication between members of different classes is impossible except in purely economic situations. These differences, therefore, are among the more important causes of the decay of local social organization in the city.

The loss of local primary contacts makes not only for personal dissatisfactions but also for the breakdown of the primary group controls, formerly very important in the maintenance of the moral order. Even when the individual felt that his own interests ran counter to those of society, he dared not transgress because of his neighbors. These, being near at hand, would observe his unsocial acts and speak disparagingly of them. If the offense were serious enough, the neighbors would ostracize the offender, a punishment he could not endure for long. The anonymous residents of the city exercise no such close personal control over each other. Since all the neighbors are strangers, none of them feel any responsibility for the behavior of the others. As individuals, they can do as they please, assured that no one will criticize them. That this condition is detrimental to social welfare can scarcely be doubted.

## THE NEW LEISURE

It is more than a hundred years since the beginning of the movement among laboring men to secure a shorter working day. Since that time the continued agitation, aided by the technological improvements which have increased production per labor unit materially, has substantially reduced the length of the working day in practically every occupation, but especially in the occupations of the city dweller. Now almost every person has several hours every day and two weeks or more every year in which he is free from occupational duties. The spending of this leisure time in profitable and pleasant ways not incompatible with the public interest is one of the major social problems of the present time. That at least some of this time should be spent in attempting to secure the satisfactions not available in the course of everyday life seems obvious.

The lack of personal relationships now characteristic of the city has given rise to numerous substitutes. Since co-operative effort has not been possible in the circumstances, these substitutes have been the outcome of private initiative, motivated not by an interest in community welfare, but by a desire for profits. The difficulty of making a pleasant evening with one's friends into a marketable commodity has interfered so much with the form of the product that it is far from satisfactory. Commercialized leisure is naturally most successful if it can cater to large numbers. These are almost certain to consist entirely or almost entirely of strangers, who are incapable of participating with each other in recreational activities. Vicarious participation must therefore be substituted for the actual.

## THE MOVING-TALKING PICTURE

The moving-talking picture comes near to fulfilling all the requirements of successful commercialized recreation. In the first place, it is universal in its appeal. It furnishes entertainment for the whole family, from the youngest to the oldest.

All persons, excepting only those both deaf and blind, can get something from the picture show. That the patrons do not know each other makes no difference, since the participation is wholly vicarious. Every individual must in his own imagination enter for himself into the action portrayed on the screen. If he is thoroughly to enjoy the performance he must choose a character and follow him through the vicissitudes of the play to the triumph at the end. A species of one-sided acquaintance frequently develops between the patron and the actor. After seeing the same actor a few times, the patron learns to look for him as one looks for the familiar face of an old friend. He learns to expect certain mannerisms of speech and action. A feeling of comfort and security, of being at home, comes to the patron attending a show in which one or more of his favorite actors plays a leading rôle. The tendency of patrons to enjoy seeing the same actor repeatedly is in part responsible for the so-called "star system," wherein the personal following of the actor is regarded as much more important than the merits of the play in which he is to appear. From the esthetic point of view this is unfortunate, since it too easily results in the performing of poor or mediocre plays, in the miscasting of actors, and in the creation of rôles which permit the star to display his talents but which are not always of high artistic quality.

Measured in terms of attendance and economic importance, the moving-talking picture is eminently successful. From Edison's kinoscope, showing the first real movie to one person at a time, was developed the modern projector. Once started, the development of the movie industry proceeded rapidly. The introduction of the talking feature gave increased impetus. There are now 17,500 movie theatres in the United States equipped with sound apparatus, with seating capacities from two hundred to five thousand. The business of producing and showing moving-talking pictures has become a gigantic enterprise, one of the largest of the industries. Next to working, sleeping, eating, and listening to the radio, no activity takes so much of the time of the average person as



movie attendance. The average person goes to the movies a little oftener than twice a month. The weekly attendance is approximately 85,000,000, to which children and young people contribute slightly more than their proportionate share.

#### SOCIAL EFFECT OF THE MOVIES

It is clear that the movie has become one of the most important features of the individual's environment. Even if its influence is mild, the enormous amount of time given over to movie attendance will permit the accumulation of serious consequences for good or ill. If, for example, moving picture theatres are badly ventilated or if looking at the screen causes eyestrain, the total effect of subjection to these conditions for years may affect the health of the regular patrons in large degree. Fortunately, the moving picture show does not appear to have any adverse effect upon health, except insofar as it prevents its patrons from taking needed exercise.

With respect to its influence upon social life, however, the movie is far from neutral. Its facilities for impressing its stimuli upon the individual are as nearly perfect as it is possible to make them. The darkened room, the musical background, the absence of conflicting stimuli, and even the slight flicker of the picture, are calculated to produce a state of heightened suggestibility in the individual. In these circumstances he cannot avoid giving attention to the picture. The movie also has intrinsic attractiveness. The technique of movie photography and projection permits a presentation of its scenes with a vividness and a realism scarcely possible to life itself. The quick changes of locale, the lightninglike speed of action and the frequent "close-ups" are breath-taking in their impressiveness. Undoubtedly many of the experiences enjoyed by proxy in the movies remain more clearly etched in the individual's memory than most of his actual experiences. Certainly the movie is more interesting and thrilling than real life; its events are dramatic and climactic; its coincidences miraculous.

The men and women of the movie are not human beings

of ordinary stature. They are stronger or weaker or luckier or more beautiful than the common mortal. Though it sometimes happens that lack of skill on part of the producer results in humdrum action carried on by humdrum people, the general aim is to cast the characters in an heroic mold. This aim is realized with sufficient frequency to permit the movie patron to find a satisfactory hero among the actors presented to him. Thereupon placing himself consciously or unconsciously in the hero's place, the moviegoer can proceed to enjoy the play.

Since the patron's social standards, morals, and ideals are acquired from the social environment, they must certainly be affected by the movie in which he spends so much time, if, indeed, they are not wholly formed by the contacts he makes there. In general, the ideas presented are identical with those current in society and consequently do little more than to repeat the accepted ways of thinking and feeling. Insofar as this is true, the movie cannot be said to influence the folkways to any significant extent. Because of its appeal to all classes and groups, it tends to make behavior more uniform and similar in the various levels of society, but it does not in this way bring about social change.

However, there are indications that the movie occasionally, at least, introduces innovations in the behavior of the actors and that this behavior subsequently enters into the folkways of society at large. It is not difficult to understand how the movie patron, seeing novel behavior presented by any actor of high prestige in a social setting of what purports to be good taste and refinement, will adopt similar behavior for himself when the occasion arises. Most of the plays presented concern the activities of the highest classes in society. The common man envies the prerogatives and attainments of these groups, but has little opportunity in real life to learn what they are like. Consequently, he is predisposed to accept the version given on the screen. Since he has no information to the contrary, he will believe that the action portrayed on the screen fairly represents the behavior of the highest classes. This circumstance

gives to the behavior not only the appearance of being socially acceptable but even of being highly desirable.

If all the innovations presented in the movies were in accord with the mores, or if they tended to favor the development of a "better" society, the moving picture would be praised by reformers as a powerful factor in social progress. Its manifestations could not then be regarded as in any sense a social problem. However, there is a considerable body of opinion which holds that the innovations of the movies are often contrary to the mores and that the behavior thereby induced in the patron tends to disorganize society. The arguments in favor of this view have great plausibility. In the first place, the presentation of movies is primarily an industry. Economic motives prevail over the esthetic or the moral. Producers, actors, and theatre operators are in the business to make money, not to reform the world. Competition forces them to present plays that will attract audiences. If attractive plays turn out to be improper and immoral, those who produce and show them have no choice but to disregard morality or go out of business. According to the ethics of business, they are not expected to sacrifice their profits in the interest of public welfare. A second argument grows out of the first. Since the moving picture show is produced for the purpose of making money, it must be pitched at the moral level which will satisfy the greatest possible number. This level will be somewhat lower than the ideal. The effect of the movie is therefore to lower the standards still further. As more and more people accept the lower standards, the plays must be pitched at still lower levels in order to appeal to the largest possible potential audience. A vicious circle is thus set in motion which, unless checked by a determined minority working for the maintenance of the moral order, does not stop short of complete degradation or moral anarchy. Theoretically, then, it appears that very little that is socially desirable can come from the movies.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a description of the subjects treated in the movies, see Dale, Edgar, *The Content of Moving Pictures*, 1935.

When we come to examine the actual effect of the movie on actual individuals, however, we encounter much conflicting evidence. Instances are fairly numerous in which delinquents ascribe their missteps to the influence of the movies. The following case indicates the sequences usually observed in such explanations:

"I got so crazy about the movies that I just couldn't stay away. My parents gave me the money to go for a long time but they finally decided I was seeing too many for my good so they refused to let me go any more. They cut off my money. I *had* to have money for the movies so I just went after it.

"I got by with small holdups for a month, didn't get much money, used it for movies, then I got caught and sent up here, charged with concealed weapons and holdups.

"Movies sorter coax a feller. You know you see them in the movies doing things, looks so easy. They get money easy in the movies, holdups, rob, if they make a mistake they get caught. A feller thinks he won't make a mistake if he tries it. I thought I could get the money put it in a bank a long time and then use it later. The movies are O.K. They'd kept me away from here."<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, instances are known in which the movie was an inspiration to socially desirable achievement. The contradictory results do not allow us to draw any definite conclusions from the numerous investigations recently made in this field. It must be remembered also that comparatively few people know where they acquire their traits and motives, and that the criminal who maintains that he "fell" because of the movies may be giving what he believes to be a socially acceptable reason rather than the real one.

Some notion of the influence of the movie may be gained from observation of its effect upon fashions and manners. That such effects are quite marked is apparent from the fact that they come to the attention of the casual observer. It is logical, therefore, to infer that significant changes are also brought about in fields of human behavior more difficult to

<sup>2</sup> Mitchell, Alice Miller, *Children and Movies*, pp. 141-2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929.

observe. Exactly what and how important these changes are, we do not know. Yet it must not be supposed that because a definite, measurable, causal relationship between the movies and crime cannot be demonstrated the movies do not have far-reaching effects upon human behavior.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE PROBLEM OF CENSORSHIP

The conviction prevailing among certain of the more conservative members of society that many movies are bad and that bad movies make bad children has led to numerous more or less successful attempts at control through censorship. The moving picture industry, finding that censorship reduces the market value of its product, has resisted censorship most vigorously. The resulting conflict has been of most unhappy character, with little possibility of reaching a conclusion because of the uncertainty of the objective.

Several States have laws under which boards or commissions view films in advance of their public appearance and eliminate the objectionable portions. Numerous towns and cities have similar arrangements. Only in a few instances have these methods proved entirely successful. It has been found impossible to establish impersonal and objective standards. Most legislation on the subject describes the unacceptable film subjects as "indecent," "obscene," "lascivious," "filthy," "unlawful," "sacrilegious," and "immoral." The meanings of these terms are evaluative in nature. Whether or not they are aptly applied to a given film scene of doubtful character depends entirely upon the moral sensibilities of the person passing judgment. In a homogeneous population, a general agreement on such matters might be reached, but in heterogeneous America it is hardly to be expected. This state of affairs makes it impossible for the movie producers to predict in advance what constitutes censorable material. The personal prejudices and peculiarities of the censors are given free play under the existing ordinances. Cases are known in which lawyers serving as censors have eliminated scenes which presented lawyers in

<sup>3</sup> See Blumer, Herbert, *Movies and Conduct*, 1933.

the rôle of villain. The unpredictability of censorship places a considerable risk upon the movie producers. If a film is rejected *in toto*, it may not be shown in the territory under the jurisdiction of the rejecting censors. If certain parts are rejected, the continuity of the plot or story may be ruined. In either case, the producers will suffer financial loss which might have been averted if they had known in advance that certain contemplated scenes would be prohibited.

In an attempt to prevent undue losses from this source and also to prevent the further development of the censorship movement, the moving picture producers have maintained, since 1922, an organization to cultivate friendly relations with the morally-minded public and to combat censorship by doing their own censoring. Both of these aims have been realized, the producers manifesting a disposition to show pictures of as high a moral tone as the paying public will tolerate. It is possible, of course, that the inanity which so frequently characterizes the movie play is a result of the effort of the producers to avoid giving offense in any way to anybody. And it must be recalled that the solution of the censorship problem, however successful, does not dispose of the question of the effect of movies upon human behavior. This still remains a factor of unknown magnitude in the causation of the rapid social change of modern times.

#### COMMERCIALIZED DANCING

One of the outstanding differences between the present and the past of as late as one hundred years ago is the vast increase in leisure time available to the members of the lower economic groups. Free time, formerly the prerogative and the mark of the gentleman, now exists for practically all men. The problem of its utilization is solved for the majority by the movie, but there remains a large minority for whom the opportunity to participate actively has, on occasion, a stronger appeal. Many of these are attracted to the dance, the second most important form of commercialized leisure.

Studies in social history reveal that dancing has been prac-

ticed in all times and at every level of culture. Among primitive peoples it was usually of religious significance; until recently it had religious significance in Christendom itself. It was also utilized as a device of magic to bring rain for crops, success in hunting, or victory in battle. For these latter purposes, the dance consisted of a dramatic rehearsal of the desired events. Set rules for the conduct of the dance prevailed, the dancers wearing certain costumes or masks and going through prescribed movements. Music always accompanied the dance, and among primitive peoples the two activities appear to have been inseparable. The whole community participated in the dance, though in general the men and women performed in separate groups. The practice was firmly imbedded in the folkways and was concerned with group objectives; consequently, it was not in any sense a social problem.

With the advance of civilization, the dance has lost its importance to the group, but it appears to have gained in importance to the individual. Its orgiastic aspects have been cultivated and at the same time have met with group disapproval, the latter resulting from the acceptance of the ascetic doctrine that pleasure is wrong. This condition made possible the social problem of dancing, one of the earliest forms of which appeared during the Middle Ages. Begun, apparently, by a person afflicted with chorea, dancing spread as if by contagion. The characteristic dance was called the tarantella, from the belief that it was caused by the bite of the tarantula. The efforts of the civil and religious authorities to stop it were unavailing, until they discovered that the dance thrived on opposition. Since the dancing was of an exhibitionistic variety, it could not continue without an audience. A repetition of the dancing mania occurred in Europe in the eighteenth century with the invention of the fandango. Churchmen who went to see the dance to determine the degree of its wickedness were themselves captivated with it. Later it, too, died from loss of interest on part of the spectators.

Like the tarantella and the fandango, the modern dance has grown out of the European folk dances. These were usually

performed by large groups, with no partners. Numerous dance patterns were in use, many of them associated with some particular season or recurring celebration. The really modern dance began with the waltz, which came into fashion in continental Europe a little more than a hundred years ago. The moralists of the time regarded this form of dancing as wicked and the music by which it was performed as vulgar. The opposition has been in vain, however, for the waltz and other forms of dancing derived from it have spread over the whole Western world and have become increasingly popular. Dancing by the two sexes together in couples is not found among the Orientals. The peoples in this civilization agree with the opponents of the dance in the Occident in regarding the practice as immoral.

Dancing becomes a social problem when it ceases to be participated in by the whole community. The erotic stimulation resulting from dancing places a severe strain upon the mores of sex behavior. As long as all the participants were members of the same primary group, the maintenance of social control was easy enough. The unspoken threat of disapproval by close friends and relatives kept the dancers within the established bounds of propriety as approved by the group. Occasional violators were ostracized. With the substitution of the public dance for the private dancing party, primary group controls are no longer adequate. The patrons are strangers, with little feeling of responsibility for each other. As long as a dancer does not interfere with the enjoyment of the others, he is not likely to be criticized for his actions, no matter how extreme they may be. Moreover, the individual is not so sensitive to the criticism of strangers as to that of intimate acquaintances. The dance hall proprietor drives away patrons and loses money if he is too particular. There is a decided tendency also for dancing to be associated with drinking and sex vice. Prostitutes find in the anonymity of the dance floor a convenient opportunity to solicit trade. Tempted by a share in the proceeds, the dance hall proprietor may become a partner in the business. The sale of liquor, licit or illicit, also offers



him a way of making more money, which competition may force him to adopt.

Although it has existed for a long time, the public dance hall has had its greatest vogue since the World War. It has been suggested that the increase in mobility of large sections of the population, occasioned by the War, may have been one of the causes for the further breakdown of the primary-group mores, thus encouraging the free and easy behavior of the modern public dance. Some of the recreational enterprises of wartime, in which citizens were urged to extend hospitality to soldiers even if the guests were total strangers, may have had a similar effect. It has also been suggested that the recent popularity of dancing has psychological causes. Modern life, it is said, is too strenuous to be endured continuously. Relaxation which provides escape from thought is necessary, and this is supplied by the dance. The rhythmic music and the monotonous movement produces in the dancers a semihypnotic state in which thought is inhibited and rest obtained. The positive pleasures to be derived from the dance are limited. A slight illusion of social prestige may accompany the performance for some people. For others it may be an avenue to random acquaintance and thus serve as a means of securing new experience.

Whatever the explanation, the fact remains that dancing has become increasingly popular in recent years and that public dancing places have increased both in size and number as a result. Devices for intensive commercialization have divested the last traces of sociability from many of the dance floors. The bowery dance appeals to the most transient type of patron and increases profits by requiring a separate ticket for each dance interval. These intervals are abbreviated as much as the tolerance of the patrons will permit. The persistent intrusion of clicking turnstiles, of barking ticket sellers and of frequent movements off the floor to facilitate the collection of tickets reduces the whole proceeding to the sordid level of money-making.

Still more completely commercialized is the so-called

"closed" or taxi-dance hall.<sup>4</sup> It differs from the more ordinary type in that men only are admitted, the dancing partners being supplied by the management. Often it is called a dancing academy or school; the dances are described as "lessons" and the partners as "instructresses." Appealing to men who have no social connections or who because of racial, cultural, or personal handicaps are unable to establish any such connections, the closed dance hall is unable to offer its patrons anything worthy of the name of social life. A justifiable suspiciousness keeps everyone present from revealing himself to anyone else. That such an enterprise can flourish is telling evidence of the desperate loneliness of a large number of men in the large cities.

As might be expected, the anonymous patronage of the dance hall permits, if it does not actually encourage, forms of behavior which, if not checked, rapidly degenerate into sexual promiscuity. It is this feature of the public dance hall which is generally recognized as a social problem, rather than the failure of the dance hall to provide opportunity for the cultivation of wholesome acquaintanceships and friendships. Society has contented itself, therefore, with the enforcement of regulations forbidding extreme and vulgar forms of dancing, unduly late hours, and morally or physically dangerous conditions for the employed girls. The regulations have taken the form of municipal ordinances enforced by the police department or by representatives of interested private organizations working under supervision of the police. In some cities, dance hall operators are required to pay the salary of a chaperon or supervisor who is stationed on the dance floor to enforce orderly behavior. General ordinances and laws prohibiting vice and the sale of liquor are, of course, applicable to the dance hall as to any other place of business.

#### THE ROADHOUSE

Although the time has been short, the city has already developed means of control which, when diligently applied,

<sup>4</sup> See Cressey, Paul G., *The Taxi-Dance Hall*, 1932.

effectively prevent obviously undesirable behavior in public dance halls and night clubs. Where such control is rigorously exercised, some dance hall operators find it profitable to move their establishments outside the jurisdiction of the city. A location is chosen on a good road near the city, but not in it. Well-placed advertising informs the patrons of the business; private automobiles bring them out. The attraction of freedom from supervision easily overbalances the difficulty of traveling a few extra miles. Often the police force of the village or rural community where the resort is located finds the lawlessness of the place beyond its powers to contend with. Rural constables are frequently private citizens for whom police duty is nominal or incidental. They are too few to handle a situation requiring constant vigilance, and their inexperience in dealing with offenders places them at a great disadvantage. Furthermore, the community does not usually have a set of ordinances facilitating police control of situations as new as those appearing in connection with the roadhouse.

It sometimes happens also that the rural community in which a resort of this type is operated feels little concern for what goes on there. The operator and the patrons are all from the city. They do not participate in the life of the community. From this point of view, it appears foolish for the farm community to tax itself for the purpose of regulating the behavior of strangers from the city. Under such a state of public opinion, the local police are likely to be inactive or, if they have inclinations toward dishonesty, they may sell immunity from arrest to the roadhouse operators. For these various reasons, the roadhouse, by whatever name it may be called, tends to combine dancing, liquor selling, sex vice, and gambling and to flourish in undisturbed spots just outside the large city.

In the course of time, local control over these establishments might be developed, but for the immediate future dependence must be placed upon State legislation. State laws can be better enforced than local ordinances in preventing illegal activities

of the kind usually found in the roadhouse. The greater resources of the State permits the concentration of as many enforcement officers in the roadhouse area as may be needed, whereas the small village cannot bear the expense of a large police force. Furthermore, the State law may be enforced even where local sentiment is not zealous in its support.

#### OTHER FORMS OF COMMERCIALIZED LEISURE

Practically all forms of commercialized leisure excepting the theater and the dance may be included under the term "sports." These are still more specialized in their appeal than either the movies or dancing, and no single sport attracts every sportsman, but in the aggregate sports form an important activity of the urban male population. The more conspicuous of the vicariously enjoyed sports are baseball, football, horse racing, and prizefighting. Attendance at the various exhibitions of sport has come to be a legitimate form of recreation for members of the upper classes, a fact which may be in part responsible for the greatly increased popularity of sports in the past three decades.

An interest in sports, even if only as an observer, cannot in itself be regarded as a social problem. It becomes such only when it is indulged in to the exclusion of active participation in athletic activities or if it results in neglect of business. For many city dwellers, attendance at sporting events provides the only available opportunity for physical recreation, thus serving as a substitute for actual play. The lack of complete satisfaction derivable from mere looking on is indicated by the numerous attempts of the "fans" to add interest to the performance by betting on the outcome. In the case of horse racing, the gambling interest appears to be greater than the interest in racing as such. Improvement in the situation is not to be gained by suppressing sports, which are merely a symptom of the need for play, but rather by providing better means and opportunities for city men to engage with each other in athletic games.

## PROGRAMS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF URBAN LIFE

It is generally recognized that the anonymity of city life robs the urban resident of personal contacts and forces him to live a socially isolated life in the midst of crowds of people.

Many of the leisure-time activities of individuals are apparently directed toward a remedying of this defect. Concerted movements designed to improve city life have, therefore, consisted largely of attempts to restore primary group conditions and values. Various means have been tried to achieve this end. The movement for community organization has emphasized the desirability of uniting the members of the locality, as, for example, the residents of a city block, into a club or society for the purpose of carrying on projects of interest to the group and for cultivating friendships. The movement has not been successful. Local leaders are lacking. City people have become wary, suspecting a racket in every proffer of friendliness. Most of them, moreover, do not live long enough in one locality to have any interest in its affairs. Political, religious, racial, and other differences may prevent co-operation of any kind.

## THE SOCIAL SETTLEMENT

In the poorer sections of the larger cities, private organizations or individuals have established numerous so-called settlements with the object of raising the general level of social life in these areas through the example set by the residents of the settlement and by giving opportunity to the members of the community to participate in socially commendable activities. Through the agency of the settlement, the members of the community may hear lectures of an educational character, attend classes in language, sewing, manual training, or art, take part in dramatics or reading clubs; in short, they may acquire what is often designated as "culture." The settlement furnishes leadership in campaigns for community betterment of every kind, from street cleaning to public libraries. It is

now believed that the settlement's day of usefulness is past, but it cannot be denied that this type of organization has quite justified its existence.

### THE LUNCHEON CLUB

In practically all of the attempts at improvement of community life, the motivation has come from persons other than those mainly to be benefited. There have been few attempts of city people to help themselves. An exception to the general rule is to be found in the luncheon club. This movement represents a serious attempt by business men to bring into their own lives some of the primary-group values which have been disappearing with the disintegration of the neighborhood. They attempt to rule out the hard, unsympathetic contacts of the market place and substitute for them the close, personal contacts of friends. Their meetings are held at the table, a situation well calculated to produce primary-group sentiments; they sometimes call each other by their first names; they avoid discussing their deeper differences. The popularity of these organizations indicates that they provide a successful technique for satisfying the business man's hunger for human companionship.

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## OUR CHANGING ECONOMY

WHAT a man does for his living places its mark so distinctly upon him as to constitute one of the most important factors in the determination of his personality. Even more conspicuous is the effect of economic life as a whole upon the culture of the group. While it cannot be demonstrated, as certain writers have supposed, that economic activities determine the precise form of family, government, or religious institutions which will develop in a given society, it is nonetheless true that these activities have a powerful and extensive influence. Since economic activity is a continuous necessity, it comes first; other forms of culture must at least in some degree adapt themselves to it. The tendency for consistency among the various cultural elements brings the noneconomic culture into conformity with the economic. When the two are in harmony, the society in question may be said to be well adjusted economically.

Instances of satisfactory adjustment are common enough among primitive and even barbarous groups; they are decidedly rare in civilized societies and practically nonexistent among modern peoples. The maladjustment existing between the economic and the noneconomic phases of culture adversely affects the happiness of the individual and, consequently, appears as one of the more serious social problems of the present.<sup>1</sup> Because of the impelling nature of economic culture, we naturally look to it for an explanation of the difficulty, rather than to noneconomic culture. The latter may be regarded as secondary, though it possesses qualities of permanence which enable it to resist the conditioning process stubbornly and even, in

<sup>1</sup> See Ogburn, William F., *Social Change*, 1922.



some cases, to delay changes in the economic world for a long period.

Economic culture resembles other forms in that it is subject to constant change. It differs from certain other phases of culture, such as dress or etiquette, in that the change is usually unilateral. Since economic activity is a means to tangible ends, it can easily be tested for efficiency. It is readily discovered which of several methods of raising wheat or of mining coal yields the largest return per unit of energy expended upon it. The choice of new methods to supersede the old is therefore not dependent upon the vagaries of choice or fashion. There can never be a long conflict of opinion over the relative merits of two economic techniques, if one produces the desired result more cheaply or with less work than the other. The inescapability of this fact determines for economic culture as a whole the direction of its change, namely, toward an ever-increasing efficiency.

This is not to say that the movement proceeds in an easy, uninterrupted flow. Noneconomic factors often prevent the adoption of the more efficient methods for many years after their discovery, and sometimes even succeed in substituting less efficient techniques for those already in use. If a machine were devised by means of which flour could be made from coal at one tenth the cost of making flour from wheat, the landowners and farmers of the wheat-growing areas would object to its use. The objections would probably appear in several different forms. An appeal would be made to popular sympathy for the large number of worthy men, women, and children whose livelihood depends upon wheat culture. It would be argued that this group has a vested right to the flour market, which society is morally bound to recognize. Propaganda would be spread abroad describing alleged defects in artificial flour, its lack of some little-known but highly important food element, the danger to life and health attendant upon its use. The greatest effort would be expended upon attempts to secure the co-operation of the chief institutional controls of society. If the church could be induced to pronounce the

consumption of artificial flour sinful, or if the government could be prevailed upon to pass a law forbidding its manufacture and sale, the wheat producer would be saved and an advance in the technique of food production would be postponed.

The most casual observer has seen instances of a similar kind in his own community. Owing to the existing methods of distributing the economic product, it is often to the interest of individuals and groups to curtail production instead of enlarging it. When these producers are able to do so, they interfere with all economic changes which are likely to prove unprofitable to themselves. Occasionally, as when many workers are unemployed, expensive hand labor is substituted for machinery in order to provide employment. So successfully and frequently is the process of economic change halted by interested individuals or by weight of custom that the movement toward greater efficiency may be as imperceptible as the creeping of a glacier. But like a glacier, economic change goes on inevitably. Competition knows no morality; ultimately it breaks down every social obstacle. New techniques may be held back and delayed for long periods, but finally they will be accepted and utilized. Flour will at last be made from coal, if the product is cheaper than flour made from wheat.

#### RATE OF ECONOMIC CHANGE

The reciprocating effects of the economic and non-economic phases of culture upon each other suggest that, though both are subject to change, the rate of change may vary considerably. A glance at economic history shows this to be true. In general, it appears that economic change proceeds most slowly among societies on low cultural levels. Economic techniques in such societies are few, in extreme instances amounting to little more than the art of collecting natural objects. Lack of positive control over the physical environment makes primitive peoples fearful of experiment and illogical in their conclusions. So precious is their little store of culture that it must not be

tampered with. Misinterpreted experiences lie back of inviolable taboos. Isolation also contributes largely to the stability of primitive cultures. The limited means of making a living that are available to primitive peoples forces them to live in small, widely scattered communities. The smallness of the group reduces the chances of innovation by individual invention, and the absence of adequate systems of communication greatly interferes with the acquisition of cultural traits by borrowing from other groups. It may be concluded fairly that the more elementary an economic culture the less rapid will be its rate of change.

In advanced societies are found many social factors favorable to change. Large, dense populations, united by easy and immediate communication, increase the chances for new discoveries and facilitate their distribution. Social attitudes encouraging experiment and welcoming novelty induce the individual to seek improvement. The accumulation of technique is so great as to provide unlimited materials for utilization as elements in new combinations. Furthermore, advanced societies have given to many individuals economic security and abundant leisure, placing them in a position to engage in experimenting without the necessity of producing immediately profitable results. When all of these factors are taken into account, it is not difficult to understand the rapid rate of economic change which is so conspicuous a feature of modern life.

#### INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF CAPITAL

The number and variety of economic techniques are so great that it is no longer possible, as it was in primitive society, for a single individual to master them all. Division of labor has gone so far that the members of a given occupation perform only a few of hundreds of manipulations or treatments necessary to the completion of the finished product. In breaking up the process of manufacture into a series of relatively small acts, it has become possible to utilize machinery to an ever-increasing extent, thus obviating skill on the part of the

worker. Even where skill is required to operate the machine, such skill is useless without the machine upon which to exercise it. This fact has tremendous significance for the modern workman. It introduces into the economic process the factor of capital, in the form of tools, machinery, and factories, no longer owned by the worker himself. As knowledge and savings increase, the amount of capital also increases; without its use, production relapses to the level of the handicraft stage. The greater efficiency given to production by the use of capital practically compels its use and enables its owners to collect a share of the product. Since neither capital nor labor can produce without the assistance of the other, some agreement as to the division of the product must precede production. As capital continues to increase in importance, its owners are enabled to collect a larger portion of the proceeds of industry. This necessitates frequent changes in existing arrangements with the workers, many of which result in lowered productivity due to the idleness of the workers and the machines while negotiations are under way.

#### OWNERS, MANAGERS, AND WORKMEN

The complete separation of ownership and management inherent in the corporate system of industrial organization lies at the root of many of the social problems associated with industry. To the stockholder, ownership means only the right to demand that the management shall so run the business as to pay large and frequent dividends. The management, forced to comply with this demand, cannot permit itself to be moved by humanitarian considerations. It must buy its materials and labor at the lowest possible price. Nor can it be too scrupulous in its dealings with the purchaser of its products. The product must be sold for as high a price as possible, even if the customer must be cajoled, deceived, threatened, or forced into buying something he neither needs nor wants. The workmen who operate the machinery have only the remotest interest in making profits for the stockholders. Their occupations are to them merely the means of securing money with

which to buy what they want. Unless the rate of their wages is directly dependent upon it, they have no concern for the quality of the work they do. Since the management is continually trying to get more work for less pay, the workmen retaliate by trying to get more pay for less work. The net result of the operation of the system is that social values of the highest importance are subordinated to purely economic values, which, though essential, are not all-sufficing.

### THE FACTORY

Still another significant feature of recent economic change is the great increase in the factory method of production. The division of labor and the use of power for the operation of machinery necessitates the assembling of many workers in the same place. The transportation of partly finished materials from worker to worker would add unreasonably to the cost of the product if the workers were not all near together; and power, whether generated by steam or water, can be most economically produced in large units. Furthermore, the increased size and complexity of the machinery requires that it be stationary, and that the workman go to the machine instead of taking it with him. These conditions have imposed upon the worker the necessity of going to a factory instead of doing his work at home as formerly. The factory is not so easily adjustable to individual needs as is the home workshop. The speed of the machine determines the pace of its operator. He cannot work more slowly when he is ill or more rapidly when he feels exceptionally energetic. The hours of labor must be regular, the whole procedure routinized. The difficulty with which workers, especially women and children, adjust themselves to the invariable routine of the factory constitutes a well-recognized social problem.

### ECONOMIC CHANGE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

It is a well-known fact that among the simpler forms of life the relatively undifferentiated portions of the body can perform a number of different functions, whereas among the

higher forms the various functions are performed by organs capable only of rendering a particular service. Certain lower animals may be cut in two, yet live and thrive. Among the higher animals, the destruction of a single vital organ will cause death. The higher animal may be more adaptable as an entirety, but he has had to pay for this achievement by a corresponding loss of ability in the separate parts of the organism, each of which has become completely subordinated to the whole.

A closely analogous condition characterizes the modern industrial worker as compared with his predecessor of handicraft days. The vast productivity of the modern economic system has been secured at the expense of individual adaptability. By training the worker to become expert in the performance of only a few tasks, we have made him dependent upon the continued smooth operation of the entire system. This dependence places the worker in a precarious position. Deprived of the possibility of making a living in any way other than by working at his job, he loses also his power to bargain for higher wages. The loss of this power has long since been forgotten; it is taken for granted that the employer will establish the wage rates. Only when a number band together can they challenge the employer. But their attempts to do so have rarely proved successful.

The sense of insecurity and hopelessness which necessarily develops as a result of this condition constitutes a persistent social problem. Worry over wage reductions and unemployment, ever-present possibilities, prevent the thoughtful worker and his family from enjoying their income satisfactorily even when it is fairly high. There is always the future to think of. Against its uncertainties there must be savings and insurance. The proper amount of each can only be guessed at. No life plan can be formulated with any assurance that it can be carried out.

It is scarcely surprising that so many members of the laboring class have given up all attempts to solve the problem, adopting instead an attitude of hopeless resignation. In this

group are found those who make no attempt to save, who spend their earnings on payday, and who must, therefore, join the breadlines whenever for any reason they are out of a job. In times past, this attitude prevailed only among casual laborers in such occupations as gold mining, lumbering, or fishing, but in recent years, when the uncertainty of employment has made large sections of other working groups "casual," many have completely abandoned any effort to do anything toward a permanent betterment of their condition. The relationship between a hand-to-mouth existence and the problem of relief is obvious.

#### LOSS OF OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS

No one who visits a factory can fail to be impressed with the complexity of the machines and with the skill of the men who built them. This skill, however, does not reside in the operative who tends the machines. He usually has, and needs, less skill than the tool worker of former days. The result is that he finds his work too easy and, consequently, dull. The joy of engaging in creative effort is not for him. He exercises no inventiveness, no originality. If he works with materials, a ready-made pattern guides his hand. Or, often as not, the pattern guides the machine and the worker's job is merely to supply the material to the machine. Individuality in his work cannot be tolerated. What he does must fit into a scheme involving hundreds of other workmen. Standardization is absolutely necessary.

Some of the loss of personal satisfaction may be compensated for by the increased amount of leisure available to the modern worker. The great interest shown in hobbies of various kinds during the past several years testifies clearly to the desire of people to do something interesting. In some cases, the hobby, though noneconomic, may give the individual the same sort of satisfaction he would have received from his work before the advent of machine-tending as the chief occupation. If the individual can reduce his daily task to a series of automatic actions, he may pass the working day agreeably enough, plan-

ning on what he will do when it is over. Too many people, however, have no real hobbies. They spend their spare time looking for vicarious pleasures, which in the end leave them discontented and unhappy.

#### ECONOMIC COMPLEXITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

The division of labor, by limiting the part to be performed by each worker, might have been expected, *a priori*, to have simplified greatly the adjustment of the individual to the economic system. He has only to find an unoccupied niche, learn the few motions required, and perform them in order to gain a living. Unfortunately, his problem is not so easy as it seems. While the actual task may have been greatly simplified, other aspects of the economic system have become more complicated. The difficulty of finding a place in the system furnishes a good illustration. At present, in many instances, more ingenuity and skill are required to secure a job than to perform the duties of the job itself. Almost anyone not lacking in natural ability can learn the skills of any of a number of occupations. However, when he attempts to put these skills into practice, he meets obstacles of many kinds. He may find that it is necessary to belong to a union, which has requirements as to apprenticeship, initiation fees, or even nationality and family connections which he cannot meet. Or, more likely, he may find that personal influences count for more than training. If he is ambitious enough to wish to enter business for himself, he will find, in addition to fierce competition from powerful corporations, an intricate maze of laws, regulations, and customs governing organization, finance, buying and selling, with all of which he must be familiar. To be an expert soap maker, for example, does not guarantee to a man that he will be able to make a living at the business of soap manufacture. He will have to know how to organize a factory and an office, how to raise capital by the sale of stock in a corporation, where to secure raw materials, and how to advertise the finished product so that it may be sold. If his knowledge is deficient at any point, the soap maker will prob-



ably fail in his undertaking and be forced to join the millions who seek jobs in factories belonging to other men. There is no other recourse; the economic system has become too complex for the average man to enter as an entrepreneur.

#### RATIONALIZATIONS OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM

The net result of the far-reaching economic changes of the past hundred and fifty years has been the development of a society in which economic interests and motives dominate every phase of life. Values are given in pecuniary terms; those which are not thus calculable are denied reality. Worth and cost have become identical. Not content with setting up a scheme of this sort, we have undertaken to protect it from criticism and attack by stating that it is good and right or, at worst, inevitable. Much of the socio-economic theorizing of the period is little more than a defense of things as they are. Defensive theorizing or rationalizing is not, of course, a peculiarity of our times. The strain for consistency in the ethos seems to require some such exercise of every civilization. In our own, it has taken the form of economic theory demonstrating the social value of individual initiative and free competition. Individual greed and social welfare are shown to be entirely compatible. As for the poor who fail in the struggle and can never recover, their state is shown to be the result of the ruthless operation of natural laws, which man neither can nor should tamper with. Very recently, we have recognized the cruder forms of this rationalization for what they are. It is perhaps as a result of this recognition that we have come to realize that a great many, if not nearly all, of our social problems grow out of our economic system.

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## ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC MALADJUSTMENT

ALTHOUGH men have gone far in gaining control over those aspects of nature upon which depends the security of life and possessions, considerable risk remains to be borne, due to certain natural or accidental changes to which the human race has been unable to adjust satisfactorily. Some of these changes occur so slowly that they can be foreseen in time to avert calamity; others come so suddenly and unexpectedly that it is impossible to prepare for them in advance. The former include the using up of irreplaceable natural resources, such as coal, petroleum, and other minerals, and the depletion of natural products such as soil, forests, game, and fish, which can be restored only by long-continued effort. The sudden changes are of the character usually described as disasters. These often result in heavy losses, both in lives and in property. About half a dozen events of sufficient magnitude to be called catastrophes may be expected to occur annually in America. More than a million persons perished in the disasters of the world in 1931.<sup>1</sup> When much damage is caused by disasters, or the homes and working places of large numbers of people are simultaneously destroyed or injured, an acute problem of economic and social rehabilitation arises which must be met by society. Since the problem varies somewhat with the kind of disaster which causes it, the main varieties will be discussed separately.

### STORMS

No part of the United States is immune to the danger of damage by storms. Some parts are relatively free from high

<sup>1</sup> Carr, L. J., "Disaster and the Sequence-Pattern Concept of Social Change," *American Journal of Sociology*, September, 1932, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 207-18.

winds, however, and the more serious kinds, tornadoes and hurricanes, occur only in fairly well-defined regions. The tornado is found most frequently in the Mississippi valley, particularly west of the river, the spring and summer months being the period of its greatest activity. Its path may vary in width from a few yards to several miles and in length from one mile to a hundred or more. If it passes over a sparsely populated area, the damage will be confined to the destruction of the farmsteads and trees in its path. However, if it strikes a town or city, the loss is likely to be heavy. The hurricane appears most often in the areas adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico, but, as shown by the great storm of the autumn of 1938,<sup>2</sup> no part of the Atlantic Coast can be considered quite secure. It differs from the tornado in that it is a straight instead of a twisting wind and in that it lasts much longer. It generally covers a much larger area than the tornado and, hence, does more damage. It is almost always accompanied by heavy rain. The economic loss resulting from tornadoes and hurricanes consists of the destruction of houses, furniture, factories, crops, and communication systems, and of the death of breadwinners who have dependents. If the storm is of great magnitude, it may paralyze for a time the whole economic life of the community, so that no productive work is performed during the period. As examples may be mentioned the tornado of 1925 and the hurricane of 1926. The former struck in five States of the Middle West, killing 800 persons and injuring 13,000; thirty-five towns were totally destroyed. The latter killed over 300 persons and injured over 6,000. The destruction of buildings and other property, valued at \$165,000,000, left 40,000 persons homeless.

Excepting only the extreme western and southern portions, the whole area of the United States is exposed to the danger of winter storms or blizzards. The combination of wind, snow, and low temperatures which makes up a blizzard sometimes causes loss of life and considerable destruction to prop-

<sup>2</sup> See Federal Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration, *New England Hurricane*, 1938.

erty, but it is chiefly noted for its paralyzing effect upon transportation and communication. In a severe blizzard, telephone and telegraph lines are broken down and railroads and highways are blocked by drifting snow. Workers cannot get to their places of employment; milk and groceries cannot be delivered; messages cannot be sent. All activities requiring people to leave their homes are suspended until the storm abates. Fortunately, such storms do not usually last more than a few days, and the radio now serves to maintain communication in spite of broken wires.

Precautions against disasters of this kind are difficult to take. Obviously tornadoes, hurricanes, and blizzards cannot be prevented by any techniques now at our disposal. To a limited extent they may be forecast, and warnings may be issued which will enable people to protect their lives, if not their property, but the uncertainty as to whether and where a storm will strike, even when conditions are favorable to its development, militates against the taking of those precautions which cost effort and money. In dealing with storms, therefore, we must do most of our work as relief rather than as prevention.

#### EARTHQUAKES, EXPLOSIONS, AND FIRES

Earthquakes and explosions are treated together, because their destructive effects are similar; fires are included because they almost invariably follow the former and complete the destruction. In some parts of the world, earthquakes occur with such frequency and violence as to affect the style of architecture, the houses being constructed of light, elastic materials which will adjust to the shock without breaking or crumbling. In the United States, severe earthquakes have not been frequent enough to result generally in the development of quake-proof buildings, but even where shocks are common due precautions are not always possible. In Japan, for example, the earthquake of 1923 killed 100,000 people and destroyed property valued at nearly a billion dollars.

Explosions usually occur in connection with mining or with military operations, and are often attended with heavy loss of

life. Fires do not ordinarily cause many deaths, but are very destructive to property,<sup>3</sup> especially to buildings, and are extremely disorganizing in their effects on the persons involved.

The abrupt flight of men, women, and children from their dwellings and places of employment to refuges in parks and open spaces, their houses and furniture perforce left a prey to the flames, the separation of families in the haste and confusion of the rout, the agony of fear and suspense until they are reunited, the utter dependence upon others for shelter, food, and clothing—this drama of the refugee is a characteristic which city-wide fires have in common. Fires such as these work sudden, violent, extensive, and prolonged interruptions of the normal community life. They destroy vast stores of food and other necessities, dislocate transportation, disorganize business, throw thousands out of employment, and create relief problems which the prostrate community is unable to meet without outside assistance.<sup>4</sup>

Like storms, earthquakes cannot be prevented nor can they, as a rule, be predicted. Explosions, however, can be reduced to negligible numbers through the combined efforts of all who occupy positions of danger. Extreme care in mining operations, with proper means of protection and escape, will prevent a large part if not all of the loss of life and property due to mine explosions and the resultant fires. The manufacture, transportation and storage of explosive substances can be so conducted as to eliminate most of the danger from this source. Fires from any cause whatsoever not only can be prevented but in many cases can be stopped after they have begun. Because of the efficiency of modern fire-fighting apparatus, nearly all fires are extinguished before they reach the proportions of a disaster. Though the aggregate loss from fires reaches many millions of dollars a year, loss from the individual fire is small. Only rarely, in recent years, does a fire get beyond the control of the fire department. This is most likely to happen where the fire-fighting agencies are weak, as in forest regions, or

<sup>3</sup> The fire loss in the United States during 1939 totaled \$313,000,000, an increase of 10 per cent over 1938.—*The New York Times*, January 21, 1940.

<sup>4</sup> Deacon, J. Byron, *Disasters and the American Red Cross in Disaster Relief*, p. 125. New York: The Russell Sage Foundation, 1918.

where the combustibility of the buildings renders extinguishment difficult, as in many of the smaller towns and cities. Great care in the use of fire is the central tenet of fire prevention. Human beings are themselves responsible for the vast majority of accidental fires; if they could be sufficiently careful there would be but few. However, little progress along this line seems possible; carelessness and negligence are firmly established habits. Greater success has been attained through the use of fireproof materials in building construction. The high price of these prevents their exclusive use at present, but technological improvements may be expected ultimately to cheapen costs to the point where all buildings will be at least highly fire-resistant.

### FLOODS

The residents of many river valleys and low areas adjoining seas or lakes are exposed to disaster in the form of flood. When the onset of the water is very sudden, as may follow the bursting of a dam or the landward rush of a tidal wave, little opportunity of escape is offered to the persons endangered. More often, floods follow heavy rain or snowfall in the areas drained by a given river system and, consequently, may be anticipated. Naturally, however, there is reluctance on the part of many persons to remove their property to high ground as long as there is a fair chance that the flood may not materialize. Inability to take proper measures of protection after the flood has appeared, rather than its unexpectedness, is responsible for the great loss which inevitably follows. Ordinarily, there is time to save the lives of those threatened, but no possibility of saving their property. Buildings and furniture are ruined and farm animals are drowned. The flooded area may remain uninhabitable for a long time, due to the clogging of drainage systems, the contamination of wells, or the deposits of mud on every surface.

The people of the Mississippi valley have suffered repeatedly from floods. Since 1900, more than a million persons living on its shores have been made homeless by the waters of this

great river. As a result of the heavy losses, considerable interest in flood control has been manifested in the past few years. Attempts to prevent floods are, of course, not of recent origin. Hundreds of miles of levees have been built along the lower reaches of large rivers everywhere for the purpose of confining flood waters to the bed of the river proper. An incidental effect of levee-building is the reduction of the space available for the water to occupy. Consequently the levees have to be made higher and higher. They are never quite high enough; unusual rises are likely to break through at the lowest or weakest point. Recognizing this defect in the methods employed, engineers have proposed the creation of basins at selected positions in the river valleys into which the excess water could be diverted for storage until a reduction in the flow would permit its return to the river. Such a plan might prove successful, but on account of the expense involved it has been carried out only in a few instances. Populations living in levee-protected areas continue to live there, hoping no floods will come and fleeing to higher ground for a temporary stay when forced to do so. Sometimes the only dry spot available is on the levee itself, in which case there may be insufficient food and shelter for the refugees, if not actually a shortage of space.

#### DISASTERS OF TRAVEL

The dramatic character of shipwrecks has held for them a somewhat greater attention than is justified by their economic importance at present. Modern ships, larger and stronger than their predecessors, weather storms and survive collisions more successfully than did ships of the past. Loss of life compared with the number of persons who travel or work in ships is small, only a few hundred being drowned in shipwrecks during the average year. The annual property loss, however, amounts to many millions of dollars.

Although better ships and a greater knowledge of the sea have combined to reduce the number of shipwrecks, the danger remains appreciable. To meet this danger ships are equipped



with radio and rockets to call for help, and with lifeboats, rafts, and lifebelts to keep the occupants of the sinking vessel afloat until help arrives or land is reached. The efficiency of these devices is so high that when they can be utilized the loss of life is slight. However, the infrequency of the need for life-saving equipment, together with the expense of maintaining it, causes shipowners to neglect these precautions, thereby unnecessarily increasing the risk.

In other modes of transportation, such as the railway train and the airplane, disasters sometimes occur, but, in the case of the former, they have been made so rare as to be almost negligible. In air travel, accident is still a factor to be reckoned with, although the recently achieved safety record of the air lines<sup>5</sup> indicates that the airplane may ultimately become almost as safe as the railway. In comparing the two forms of travel it must not be forgotten that for each passenger mile traveled in the air, many more are traveled on the railroads.

Compared with losses occurring in highway travel, those of the railways and airlines are trifling. Thirty or forty thousand lives is the yearly toll on the highway, with an accompanying economic loss of huge proportions. The modern motor car, capable of hurling itself along the road at speeds of more than a mile a minute, has become, in the hands of the careless driver, an instrument of wholesale destruction and a public menace. As engineers have produced safer cars and highways, drivers have increased their speed proportionately. Laws and regulations have helped but little in reducing the dangers of the automobile. The same may be said of the intensive propaganda of recent years, though possibly the latter, by reaching the younger members of society, may have a lasting effect not yet noticeable.

#### DISASTERS OF AGRICULTURE

Since the success of farming is dependent upon favorable natural conditions, it follows that any adverse change in these

<sup>5</sup> "Airplanes Fly Entire Year Without Accident," *Civil Aeronautics Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 8, April 15, 1940, pp. 157-8.

conditions is likely to have disastrous results. Too much rain or too little may completely destroy a growing crop and bring to naught a whole season's labor. Hailstorms and windstorms have the same effect. Late frosts in the spring may kill fruit blossoms and young plants; early frosts in the autumn may destroy crops not yet ready for the harvest. In addition to risk from various kinds of bad weather, the farmer must face the possibility of loss from attacks of insects, plant diseases, and other pests.

Before modern methods of transportation were in use, the loss of the chief crop over a large area resulted in a famine with its attendant evils of undernourishment, sickness, and death from starvation. In some parts of the world, notably in the more densely populated portions of India and China, a crop failure brings misery to millions of people. Deaths from acute starvation are common. The United States has never had a famine, so fortunate are the conditions under which agriculture is carried on in this country. The greater part of the land was unoccupied before the building of the railroads, which have provided means of cheap transportation, so that an area which failed to produce food sufficient for its population could be supplied from other areas having a surplus. Moreover, American farmers have ordinarily produced a large supply above their own needs. Consequently, they have been able to endure a great reduction in crop yield without suffering a food shortage. When food shortages have arisen, the farmers have been in a position to purchase supplies from other sections by converting part of their capital, which is relatively larger in America than among the farmers of India and China.

Though American farmers have, for the most part, escaped acute starvation, the frequent crop failures have had a truly disastrous effect upon the farm population. For example, successive seasons of drought over large sections have reduced the inhabitants from a state of prosperous independence to one of dire need. The loss of capital in the form of livestock, machinery, and seed which such misfortune entails may be so

great as to prevent full recovery for many years. The low, irregular, and uncertain incomes of farmers, in part caused by pests or unfavorable weather, have pronounced effects upon the social as well as the economic life of rural communities.

Efforts to reduce the numerous hazards of agriculture have met with some success. Weather defies control, but to some extent it can be predicted. In a few circumstances, the damaging effects of bad weather conditions may be avoided. The same is true of damage caused by many kinds of pests; techniques have been developed for dealing more or less satisfactorily with some of them. For the most part, however, the farmer has to take the risk, contenting himself with cheerfully hoping for the best.

#### DISASTER RELIEF

The acute needs of the victims of disaster for food, shelter, clothing, and various other forms of assistance necessitates immediate action on part of the relief agencies. In the early minutes or hours of the disaster, relief consists largely of rescue work, such as carrying persons from burning buildings or removing passengers from sinking ships. Relief of this sort must be provided by the people who happen to be in the vicinity, without regard to their qualifications or their equipment. Such organization as exists under these conditions is impromptu and temporary. Usually it is quickly replaced by the organized agencies of the community, which have command over the local resources and can proceed more systematically. If the situation is not soon brought under control by the community, aid will be tendered by the Red Cross. This organization, having disaster relief as one of its primary objects, is prepared to meet every kind of emergency. Its long and successful record of relief-giving has earned for it a public confidence which enables it to secure co-operation easily and quickly.

As soon as the occurrence of a disaster becomes known to the public, a wave of sympathy for the sufferers motivates offers of aid from many sources. Some of these are im-

practicable; others may be actually harmful. All of them need to be expertly administered. It is one of the functions of the Red Cross to redirect these well-meant efforts into useful channels, thus utilizing the desire to help in the most efficient manner possible. This does not mean that all aid given is under the control of the Red Cross nor that it should be, for other qualified agencies such as local charities, church groups, the Salvation Army, the police, and the United States Army all do excellent work in disaster relief.

When the incidents connected with the disaster have lost their news value, the enthusiasm for relief largely disappears. Relief may be more necessary during this period than before. It is here that the organized agency performs its greatest service, namely, that of rehabilitating the victims of disaster. The members of separated families must be reunited; the injured must be provided with hospital care; ruined storekeepers must be set up in business; widows must be pensioned; orphaned children must be given homes and an opportunity to secure an education. These services, so essential to the restoration of social position and self-respect, may require years to complete. Professional case workers and abundant means are necessary for final success.

#### WASTE AND EXHAUSTION OF RESOURCES

Differing from disasters in that they come slowly are those changes in our natural environment which follow the consumption of irreplaceable substances commonly called natural resources. The manufacturing techniques of the present depend for their proper functioning upon an adequate and cheap supply of coal, iron, and petroleum. At present, all of these seem quite abundant, but indications are plain that this condition will not last forever. The extent of the supplies of coal and iron available under present techniques in the United States is known with high accuracy. It is a matter of simple arithmetic to calculate how long they will last at the present rate of consumption. When they are gone, a readjustment will have to be made by utilizing sources of energy other than

coal and structural materials other than iron. There is scarcely any question but that human ingenuity will solve the problem successfully, but in the process of making the change difficulty is likely to be encountered. Groups of persons profiting by the old coal-and-iron techniques will resist the introduction of the new. Vested interests will delay the change as long as possible. Unfortunately, some groups will find themselves caught without employment, even without occupation. Ensuing conflicts will interfere with the functioning of the economic system to the social and economic detriment of society as a whole.

In some respects, we have already begun to feel the effects of exhausted resources. Large numbers of abandoned farms or, worse still, farms operated at a loss by persons who have no other recourse, indicate depletion of the soil. The systematic deforestation which has been going on in America ever since its colonization by white men has resulted in the flooding of streams in rainy seasons and in their drying up in dry seasons. Possibly there have been unfavorable effects upon the climate, since forests are believed by some observers to have a moderating influence on temperature, wind, and rainfall. The esthetic values of the landscape in many parts of the country have been impaired by the removal of the trees. One of the most serious consequences, however, is the acute shortage of lumber, which in turn has increased the cost of building and is therefore responsible in part for the housing need which now exists in the United States. Substitutes for wood are manufactured, but their cost and convenience do not compare favorably with lumber. Another serious consequence of deforestation is the stranding of populations formerly engaged in the lumbering industry. The recent depression has revealed to us numerous communities in the cut-over regions whose outlook for a living in their present locations is utterly without hope. Aid for them must be more than temporary. If they are to be saved from perpetual dependency, they must be moved to more promising areas and given a start in new occupations.

Natural resources in the form of birds, animals, and fish have, in the case of some species, suffered depletion nearly to the

point of extinction. Except in a few instances, such as that of the salmon fisheries on the Pacific coast, these resources have small economic value. Their loss will result in little economic maladjustment, but their presence in the world adds greatly to the interest and joy of living. If this were generally recognized, they would be preserved even, if necessary, at some economic loss.

Fortunately, the fertility of land, the beneficent influence of forests, and a pleasurable abundance of wild life can all be restored by systematic, prolonged effort. The soil can be built up by fertilization; forests can be grown; unless their particular species is already extinct, birds and animals can be brought back through protection from wanton destruction. Already we may see the beginnings of the appearance of a social policy favorable to the regeneration and preservation of these resources in America.

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## TECHNOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ECONOMIC MALADJUSTMENT

**M**ODERN technology differs from that of an earlier day in several highly significant ways. In the first place, it has substituted energy derived from coal, falling water, and oil for energy supplied by human muscles. This energy is expended in the turning of machines rather than in the handling of tools. The human element in the productive process, though still essential, has been thus greatly reduced in importance, so that its limitations in the way of strength and endurance and even of skill no longer enter in as factors to interfere with production. The increased use of power-driven machinery has thus increased the flexibility and capacity of industry as a whole. In many cases, machines can be speeded up or run continuously until they wear out or break down. They can be replaced quickly in any desired number. They can be kept on hand, idle, at slight expense. The result is a system with latent possibilities for enormous productivity. Rarely called on to operate at full capacity, the factories of the modern world are capable of turning out unbelievable quantities of economic goods.

A second differentiating characteristic of modern technology is its susceptibility to change. Moral considerations no longer apply in the economic field; efficiency and profitableness have become the sole bases for the judgment of economic techniques. This makes possible the discarding of old ways and the acceptance of new ones with a minimum of friction. The increased profits which nearly always follow upon the attainment of greater efficiency serve as incentives to experiments carried on with the purpose of increasing efficiency still further. Successful inventions, except when halted by strong monopolies, are at

once adopted and utilized. The great number of new devices and processes incorporated into the industrial system during the past generation has taken from the system every semblance of stability.

Partly the result of industrial capacity and instability and partly the result of ecological and social factors, is a third characteristic of modern industry, namely, its tendency to seasonal variations. In some fields of economic activity, seasonal fluctuation is and always has been inevitable, as, for example, in agriculture, in building, and in outdoor work generally. The operations of farming must necessarily be timed in accordance with the yearly cycle of climatic changes if crops are to be grown. The inclement weather prevailing during the winter months in the northern portion of the United States delays and sometimes entirely prevents practically all kinds of work not carried on in heated rooms. The great differences between the seasons are reflected in corresponding differences in the consuming habits of the population. Overcoats are purchased in the fall; automobiles in the spring. Coal is burned for heat in winter; ice cream is eaten in summer. Custom and fashion have accentuated these natural differences so as to provide an annual round of changes in consumption, many of which are unnecessary and illogical. Selling agencies have encouraged the recognition of seasonal changes as a means of increasing the demand for goods. Thus the southern portion of the United States has many of the same differences found in the north in spite of the fact that in some instances they are quite out of harmony with the climate.

Industry has been all too ready to respond to an irregular demand for its products. The ease with which the machinery of production can be speeded up is exemplified by the erection of factories during times of heavy demand, the capacities of which far exceed ordinary requirements. Apparently the demands of efficiency would favor a policy of fairly even rate of production, although the actual consumer's demand is seasonal, but here the instability of the whole economic system enters in to invalidate the assumptions which must be made in the adop-



tion of a regular schedule of production. These assumptions include a stable supply, a stable demand, and a stable price. In view of the changes going on in technology itself, none of these factors can be predicted within safe limits. Unless a manufacturer has a monopoly in his field, he cannot control the supply and consequently cannot know what it will be. The capacity of most of the plants is much greater than is likely to be required, consequently the potential supply may be all but unlimited. The vagaries of fashion or the sudden appearance of cheap substitutes may affect the demand for his product. Finally, new inventions may lower the cost of production to the point where manufactured stock must be sold at a loss. The general desire to minimize risks as far as possible encourages hand-to-mouth buying on part of wholesalers and retailers and, naturally, on part of the consuming public. The manufacturer produces goods only in response to orders already received, even though this method requires his factory to alternate between periods of night-shift operation and total shut-down.

#### CASUAL LABOR

To this system, with its irregularities, uncertainties, and sudden changes, the individual worker must adjust himself as best he can.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the machine, he cannot be speeded up to any considerable extent, nor can he appreciably reduce the costs of his maintenance while he is idle. He fares best and is most efficient when he has work day after day, year after year, with the assurance that he will be continuously employed. The existing system cannot give the worker any such assurance. In practically every industry in the United States, there are slack seasons during which the labor force is reduced. In agriculture, certain kinds of work, chiefly those connected with the harvesting of the crop, may require large numbers of workers for a few weeks or months and none at all during the remaining time. The extreme brevity of the working season

<sup>1</sup> See Webb, John N., *The Migratory-Casual Worker*, 1937.

makes it impossible for the worker to live on the proceeds of his labor at a single job until work begins again the following year. He must, therefore, find another job and probably still others in order to earn enough to survive. Job-seeking for workers of the kind here indicated requires high mobility. Often these men follow the harvest season as it advances from south to north, thus timing their arrival in a locality to coincide with the ripening of the grain, fruit, or other crop to be harvested. The uncertainty of crop yields does not permit the establishing of anything like a regular route to be traveled year after year. A bountiful harvest may be followed by a total failure the next season. Sometimes crops ready for gathering may be suddenly destroyed by storm or rendered almost worthless by low market prices. Any variation in the size of the crop will, of course, require a corresponding difference in the size of the labor force to be utilized. The worker is not in position to know, except in a general way, what wages and living conditions will be offered him when he arrives at the place where he hopes to find work. If they are satisfactory, he is pleased; if they are not, he is likely to have to accept them and make the best of it. Unless he is a most unusual individual, he will have exhausted his resources by the time he reaches the expected job. His inability to go farther will force him to work at least long enough to secure the means of moving on.

One of the economic effects of these great seasonal variations and other irregularities in the number of workers employed in a given place has been the creation of a laboring class engaged in doing casual work. Most of the members of this class are unskilled, unattached men, without dependents. However, in some localities are found numerous families, especially where the work is of such nature that it can be done by children and women. Berry-picking, beet weeding, and cotton picking are examples of this kind of work. The incomes of the casual laborers are lower than those of any regularly employed group. Even though the daily wage be fairly high, the amount earned in a year is small, owing to the time lost in moving and in looking for employment. The average casual

laborer probably spends the major portion of his days in idleness.

It is impossible, in these circumstances, for him to develop the socially approved and individually beneficial habits of prudence, foresight, and thrift. Like the one-crop farmer for whom he often works, the casual laborer is never sure of his income. Consequently, he cannot budget his expenses so as to live within his income, saving enough from the days of plenty to survive the days of need. The comparatively large wage of the working season finds him unprepared to husband his resources prudently. Ever optimistic, he always thinks a good job marks the beginning of more work, higher pay, and "better times." He therefore spends freely of the money in his pocket, replenishing his scanty wardrobe, eating and drinking, having the "good time" that he recalls from the last flush season and for which he has been hungering ever since. When the job is finished and no more work is to be had, he sinks back into the low state from which he had momentarily risen and maintains a precarious existence by begging, stealing, pawning his lately acquired possessions, or going on relief until he finds another job and repeats the cycle.

The social effects of such a life are no less striking than the economic. In a world where status is so closely associated with income as is ours, to have no money is to be classed with the lowest of the low. Even admittedly antisocial persons, such as criminals, are accorded higher rank, provided they are affluent, than is the impecunious casual laborer. Thus to be looked down upon by every group in society except his own, has an important influence upon his attitudes toward society. While not always actively antisocial, these attitudes invariably hold the social organization to be something of a conspiracy of the successful against the unsuccessful, that is, against the common working man. Shut out from participation in social life, he easily comes to feel that churches, schools, libraries, and governments are all in league against him. Because of residence and poll tax requirements he can seldom vote, and consequently feels that he has no voice in making the laws which

he is expected to obey. Little consolation is to be had from the members of his own group; his connection with them is only of the most casual and temporary sort. They constitute a group, in fact, only as a result of their similar social characteristics, since no well-defined feeling of group solidarity prevails among them. Practically no opportunity is given him for the development of an interest in general social welfare or even an interest in the welfare of his own group. The welfare of the social group often demands the temporary sacrifice of individual gains. Society secures such sacrifices by rewarding the individual with its approval. The giving of such approval is dependent upon the existence of a well-organized group, capable of group action. The casual laborer's group has no such organization. There is little leadership in this group; communication among its members is as desultory as their work and residence. They do not cohere enough to act together in any situation. If a member accepts a martyr's rôle for the good of all he may expect no recompense. His virtue must be its own reward.

Ordinarily, it might be expected that the economic interdependence of employer and casual employee would have a socializing influence upon both, but the extreme brevity of the job prevents the building up of any durable relations between them. There is no time for the worker to demonstrate efficiency and faithfulness in his task; no possibility for him to secure reward through promotion or continued employment. The employer can scarcely hope to attract superior workmen by paying high wages for the short period during which he needs many men. The result is that immediate expediency governs the wages paid and the work given in return. The employer will pay enough to induce men to work for him and no more; the worker will work hard enough to hold his job and no harder. Realizing that to hurry may only shorten the job and thus reduce his income, he may deliberately work as slowly as possible in order to make it last. Obviously, this situation breeds dissatisfaction on both sides. The employer regards the workers as lazy, unreliable, and sometimes destruc-

tive. The employees feel that they are exploited by capitalists who have no human qualities. When the extent of the mutual provocation is considered, it is remarkable that so few active conflicts have taken place between employers and casual employees. The reason is perhaps to be found in the almost total absence of organization among the workers.

#### LAY-OFFS

As has been indicated, practically all industries suffer from seasonal fluctuations, though in most of them the working period is so long that the workers regard themselves as regularly employed at permanent jobs. Especially is this true if it is the policy of the employer to rehire the same men year after year. The period of unemployment or lay-off may vary from a day or two per year to several months. In its effect upon the worker and upon the industry, the lay-off is much like the interval between temporary jobs except that it is somewhat less serious. The worker, feeling that he still has a job, is less likely to move to some other part of the country in search of another, and less likely to suffer personal demoralization from feelings of insecurity. However, many cases of destitution follow lay-offs, since few workers are able to save enough to live through even a short time without income. Moreover, in the selection of workers to be laid off, the employers are likely to choose those most recently hired, the unskilled or other easily replaceable labor; which usually means the workers receiving the lowest rate of pay. Sometimes the lay-off is used as a device for discharging the inefficient, which may result in the worker's falling into need from vainly waiting to be "taken on" again. The workers selected for the lay-off are obviously less able to bear the hardship of unemployment than the older, well-paid workers who have had the time and means to save. From the employer's point of view, this selection is entirely justifiable. He naturally wishes to retain so far as possible his most valuable workers. If they are laid off, they may find work elsewhere, thereby necessitating the hiring of untrained help when the labor force must be again expanded.

The fear of losing employees through lay-offs, as well as humanitarian considerations, have moved employers to experiment with numerous methods for avoiding lay-offs or minimizing their effects. Better planning of production and more accurate forecasting of market needs have helped in some instances. A few large concerns with many departments have been able to shift workers from one to another of these departments. Other plans include the shortening of the daily work period for the whole plant and finding work in other lines for laid-off employees. All these methods have been of some value, though in few cases has their use entirely eliminated the necessity for varying the size of the labor force through lay-offs. The problem as a whole is beyond the power of any single employer to solve.

#### TECHNOLOGICAL UNEMPLOYMENT

Because of its apparent inevitability, technological unemployment is one of the most serious problems of economic maladjustment under the existing system of production and distribution. Unquestionably, it is to the advantage of society to have large quantities of economic goods cheaply produced. We welcome and reward the invention of new machines which will lessen the amount of human energy required in their operation. We recognize, in spite of our professed belief in the dignity of labor, that the expenditure of effort, no matter how arduous, is valuable only in terms of its results in useful product. On the other hand, we are bound to take cognizance of the fact that the replacing of men by machines throws the former out of work, temporarily if not permanently.

During the decade from 1919 to 1929 the average number of employees in all our factories had been reduced from eleven and a half millions to ten and a half millions, or about nine per cent. Meanwhile our national population had increased from 105 millions to 121 millions, or fifteen per cent. However, the amount of product per man hour increased much faster than these figures indicate. Taking the average for the two years 1923-25 as our base of 100, we find that by 1926 it had increased to 106.3; by 1929 to 117; and by 1933 to 145. The phenomenal fact here has been the speeding up

during the recent depression years. Two men in 1933 could perform nearly as much work in our factories as three men could ten years earlier. The present annual increase continues at between six and seven per cent.<sup>2</sup>

Men thrown out of work for technological reasons are expected to readjust themselves as best they can, supporting their families and themselves out of their savings in the meantime. If a man has had a job requiring any special fitness in the form of natural aptitude or training or both, he will naturally seek another job of the same kind in order not to lose the advantage of his ability. He may succeed after a brief search, in which case the loss of his former job may not have been attended with serious difficulties. The chances of his finding such a job are greatly decreased by the fact that employers the country over will be forced by competition if not by inclination to adopt the same labor-saving device that cost him his job in the first instance. Two possibilities then remain open to him: he may compete with the machine by accepting lower wages, or he may change his occupation. Except in rare cases, the former is unthinkable; a change of occupation is left as the only practical alternative. This may be accomplished in two ways, either by taking a job in the field of unskilled labor, in which the worker may qualify immediately, or by training for a new occupation of the same grade or level as the one which he was forced to abandon. If he goes into the field of unskilled labor, he must accept lower wages, with the permanent lowering of his standard of living which this entails; if he chooses a new skilled occupation, he must be prepared to spend some time in training during which he will receive no income. In some trades, apprenticeships of several years' duration are required for qualification. No man with a family of several children to support can afford to spend so much time, even if he realizes that his total income for the next twenty years would be increased thereby. Altogether, it will be seen that the problem of the workman displaced by the machine is

<sup>2</sup> Ely, Richard T., and Bohn, Frank, *The Great Change*, p. 56. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1935.

not readily soluble through the unassisted efforts of the individual. It might be assumed that society, since it profits by such displacement of workmen, should help them in their need, but it has not yet admitted any such obligation.

The only organized attempt to take any action has come from the workers affected or likely to be affected by technological changes in the industries at which they are employed. These attempts have taken the form of resistance to the introduction of machinery. They have succeeded only in the few cases in which the workmen's organizations have a monopolistic control strong enough to keep out competition. In this way, a few workers have avoided the difficulties of readjustment, at the expense of the consuming public, through the retention of a means of production costlier than necessary. Now and then, not so much the result of organization as of individual resentment, protest against the machine has taken the form of sabotage or the destruction of the machinery itself. Of course, neither the refusal to admit the machine nor its destruction after it has arrived furnishes an adequate solution to the problem. The success of these methods, as a matter of fact, merely postpones briefly the inevitable, causing probably even more suffering than if the change were swift and complete.

The same may be said of solutions offered by idealists who advocate the return to a handicraft system of production. These persons object to machinery in industry on esthetic grounds rather than economic. They argue that the operation of machinery has a stultifying effect upon the worker, robbing him of interest in his work and of pride in the quality of his product. They maintain that machine-made goods lack beauty and that to be surrounded by objects of this kind makes life as a whole unbeautiful. Whether these be real reasons or merely good rationalizations it is hard to say, but it is clear that the system they are designed to restore has long since given way and can never be brought back.

The damaging effects of technological unemployment are well known. No amount of theorizing as to how displaced



workers will be reabsorbed through the increased demand for the product made cheaper by machinery, or through the increased demand for other products resulting from the purchasing power released by the lowered price,<sup>3</sup> will actually enable John Jones, glass blower, to find a job at his old trade, which was rendered useless by the installation of a machine. Demoralized by his failure, he may have taken to drink or crime. His job, if he has one, is probably on the level with that of the janitor or the night watchman. He has moved to a cheaper house in a poorer neighborhood, where his wife, accustomed to a higher standard, has a difficult time making friends. For lack of proper clothing and means of transportation, she can no longer go to church, club meetings, or gatherings of her former acquaintances. The children have had to quit school as soon as they reached the working age in order to help maintain some semblance of respectability in the family budget. Possibly the Joneses will not need to call for help from the relief organizations, but obviously their sufferings are serious enough to justify rather extensive social efforts in their behalf.

#### WASTE IN PRODUCTION

In Chapter 14 was described the loss incurred by the wasteful exploitation of the products of nature, for example, soil, forests, and minerals. Such waste may be defended, perhaps, on the ground that these products have cost nothing in the way of human effort and that we need not worry about posterity, since our forebears did not concern themselves about us. The same, however, cannot be said of the waste that occurs after these natural materials have been subjected to the manipulations of men and have thus become the products of labor. Unfortunately, the waste does not cease at this point. It continues through the whole process of distribution and of consumption as well. The resulting loss substantially reduces our national income.

<sup>3</sup> See Douglas, Paul H., and Director, Aaron, *The Problem of Unemployment*, 1931, Chapter X.

A common source of loss comes from the retention of obsolete or even of antiquated methods of production, methods which were acceptable as long as they were the best known to the technology of their time, but which have become criminally wasteful since better methods have been devised. In some cases the introduction of better methods has been deliberately prevented not only by the workers, as previously mentioned, but by those in monopolistic control of industries in which they have large investments, endangered by change. Large corporations which buy patents from inventors in order to circumvent competitors, but with no intention of embodying the improvements in their own factories, furnish the best example of this kind of waste. For the sake of profit or merely the convenience of an industrial concern, society is deprived of the advantage of using a better or a cheaper product until the patent rights expire. Even then the invention may remain buried, because, though socially valuable, it may offer little opportunity for individual profit.

More frequently the refusal to adopt more efficient techniques is due to the inertia characteristic of all customary behavior. Though relatively free in this respect, economic activity is not unaffected by the notion that the old ways are superior or at any rate safer. If the change in question is not so revolutionary that its adoption by a competitor immediately forces its use by the whole industry, many years may be required for the change to take place. Old methods are often retained after their adoption by competitors has so affected the market that they cause a decided loss, a loss which is to some extent counterbalanced by the longer time allowed the affected workers to adjust themselves to the situation.

Poor management is another cause of wasteful production. Allowing men and machines to stand idle for a part of the time waiting for materials or permitting accumulation of partly finished goods far beyond reasonable requirements or resorting to overtime operation at increased expense are examples of wasteful planning. So also are employment of untrained workers, bad arrangement of machinery, and lack of standard-

ized procedures. It is a fault of management, in the larger sense, at least, to use such poor materials that articles designed for long use wear out quickly, especially when, as in the case of plumbing in houses, the replacement is more costly than the original installation. Waste of human effort and materials also follows their diversion from the manufacture of common necessities and comforts of life into the production of expensive luxuries, such as steam yachts, diamond tiaras, and sable coats, or into harmful products, such as patent medicines, habit-forming drugs, or pornographic literature.

There is, of course, no way of knowing just how much is wasted in the ways here briefly indicated. It is not unreasonable, however, to suppose that possibly half our work goes for nothing and that, if applied according to the best techniques known, it could easily yield an income nearly twice as great as we have at present. The relation of waste to insufficient income, even under our present method of distribution, is obvious enough to merit some attention to its reduction.

#### WASTE IN DISTRIBUTION

A thousand years ago many a minor warlord built himself a castle on a height commanding a river, stretched an iron chain across the channel, and collected toll from every ship that passed. Perhaps he aided commerce incidentally by suppressing pirates and other toll collectors within his reach, but to the merchant who shipped goods it probably mattered little whether he paid to one collector or another. If the river was long, several toll takers might have established themselves along its banks and these in their avarice might exact such heavy charges as to stop commerce altogether. Unless they could come to some agreement to reduce their demands as a whole, nothing could be done for the relief of shipping; no individual collector would consent to let ships pass free in order that others might take toll. The king, remembering that the duke or marquis concerned could send a hundred good soldiers in time of need, did not like to interfere with the system. If the merchant, thus embarrassed, undertook to

send his goods by land, he fared no better. Toll gates, toll roads, and toll bridges, as well as less systematic demands from highway robbers, so reduced his stock of goods that when he arrived at his destination he had nothing left. The result was that, except over a few favored routes, commerce did not thrive, and the consuming public was obliged to content itself largely with the use of goods produced in the local community.

With the passing of the centuries, most of these crude forms of levying on the articles of commerce have disappeared. No longer do we permit individuals quite indiscriminately to take a portion of our goods without recompense. True, the activities of racketeers in the modern city resemble rather closely those of the tribute collectors of an earlier day, but it cannot be said that they are an accepted part of our economic system. They exist in spite of our efforts to get rid of them, not because of our willingness to tolerate them.

If we have succeeded in eliminating the worst forms of exploitation, we have not thereby saved ourselves, for we have allowed to arise in connection with distribution a system of selling which wastes a very large part of the huge gains we have made through efficient production and transportation. Apparently our system of production is too efficient; it can easily produce more than the market will absorb. A manufacturer who wishes to increase his business cannot do so simply by making more goods. In the complex markets of modern times, goods do not sell themselves; they must be sold. This means that though a product be ever so suitable, uniform, excellent, and cheap, it will find few buyers unless it is either advertised or hawked about by salesmen who laud its good qualities to prospective customers. Competition forces every seller to adopt the general method. He dare not be modestly honest in the claims he makes for his product; if he does not overstate its excellencies, it will seem poor in comparison with other products. He dare not let the customer exercise his own unhampered judgment, lest a more insistent salesman secure the order. The result of this condition is the diversion of a great amount of energy into the business of influencing people

to spend their money for A instead of B and B instead of A. The successive Federal censuses record an ever-increasing number in the huge army of persons engaged in trade. By no means all of the service rendered by this group is wasteful. We must have stores with proprietors, clerks, and bookkeepers; we must have persons delegated to take orders and deliver goods. But it cannot be reasonably held that we are in any way benefited as a society by the fatuous arguments of advertising, especially that of the so-called "national" variety. That it succeeds in selling the product cannot be denied, but it necessarily does so at the expense of some other product, since advertising does not add a penny to the consumer's income. Nor does it often result in helping him to a wiser selection of purchases, as its advocates sometimes argue. The exaggerations of advertising, frequently amounting to gross misstatements, bulk so large in the general scheme, and the methods of deception utilized are so ingenious, that the average person cannot possibly distinguish truthful advertising from false. It is clear, therefore, that the cleverness, the effort, the paper, and the transportation costs that go into advertising constitute almost a total loss to society—a loss which in the case of many products far outweighs the entire cost of manufacturing.

The same may be said for most of the activities of salesmen. These persons are skilled in the art of persuading people to buy something which in the absence of persuasion they might have done without. It may happen that the customer benefits through having his attention called to certain goods or to the merits of certain goods, so that he may buy more wisely or advantageously. It may also happen that he is led by the salesman to buy something which he does not need or which costs more than it is worth to him. Undoubtedly the latter is true in the case of fake oil stock, quack patent medicine, or excessively high-priced goods of any kind. To none of these, any more than to other goods, does the salesman add the slightest item of utility. His function is to conquer the market for his employer's goods, not to produce useful articles. Competition forces every seller to employ more and more

salesmen, to spend more and more money to catch the buyer's attention, to pour out increasingly larger amounts of energy which, under other conditions, might have been expended upon the product to improve its quality or saved to the consumer through a lower price.

#### WASTES OF COMPETITION

The salutary effects of competition have so engrossed the attention of Americans that we have overlooked many of the uneconomic features of the process. For though competition may stimulate to greater usefulness those who serve the public, it also adds a great cost to the operation of the system of distribution—a cost which must be paid ultimately by the consumer himself. Some of the waste herein referred to is incurred in the duplication of delivery services maintained by the numerous merchants and dealers in every city. Half a dozen milk wagons and as many delivery trucks may move along a single street every day. Each store doing a city-wide business usually has its own delivery system, though a single delivery system could easily and much more economically serve them all. Competition for customers induces merchants to extend credit to persons who are poor risks or to sell goods on the installment plan to persons who cannot really afford them. In both cases, considerable effort must be expended in making collections. Good salesmen are able to sell Illinois coal to Ohioans and Ohio coal to Illinoisans. The waste resulting from the cross haul must, of course, be paid by the consumer.<sup>4</sup>

#### REMEDIES

A system of planned distribution appears to hold forth the only hope of preventing the continuance or even the increase of waste in this process. Since much of the difficulty appears to be due to competition, this feature of our distributive process might be eliminated. This would mean the substitution of monopoly, with the attendant danger of its escape from social

<sup>4</sup> See Chase, Stuart P., *The Tragedy of Waste*, 1925.

control. However, there is no good reason for believing that it is inherently more difficult to regulate a monopoly in the public interest than it is to regulate competition.

In the meantime, some waste might be prevented by rules requiring the substantiation of advertising claims and by prohibiting some of the more expensive and offensive types of advertising, such as roadside billboards. Voluntary co-operation would permit the elimination of numerous duplicated systems and services now in operation. Education of the public as to the true values of the goods offered for sale would help by driving worthless and harmful products off the market. Such education, however, will probably have to come from private sources, since governmental agencies are accused of hurting business interests whenever they offer genuine advice to consumers.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Schorling, Raleigh, and McClusky, Howard Y., *Education and Social Trends*, 1936, p. 23.

## BUSINESS CYCLES

AS LONG as business activities were limited to barter, the phenomenon known to us as the business cycle did not appear. The shortage of one kind of goods might result in larger quantities of other goods being offered in exchange for it, or a general shortage might result in famine, but the "times" were never "hard" or "good" in a barter economy. The instability which conspicuously characterizes the economic system of the present seems to have had its beginning with the introduction of money and the various changes which the use of money has brought about.

## THE MOTIVES OF PRODUCTION

The fact that all goods and services are priced in terms of money has given this commodity a position of unique importance. Instead of serving merely as a medium of exchange, it has become the principal objective of economic effort. Men no longer engage in any sort of economic enterprise with the intention of producing goods, except insofar as doing so will enable them to make money. They seem to prefer those businesses which consist only in the manipulation of goods for profit to those which involve the addition of utility to the goods.

It has been maintained that the desire for money will induce men to produce goods in the largest possible quantities and of the best possible quality, but experience shows that this argument is false. It is often more profitable to produce goods in small quantities than in large; and shoddy or adulterated goods will often yield greater pecuniary returns than high quality products. A situation therefore arises in which in-



dividual interests become opposed to those of society at large; that is, the individual's wish to make money may be gratified by curtailment or cessation of production, to the detriment of the group as a whole, which desires a large supply of goods. When a considerable proportion of the producers find it no longer profitable to produce, business stagnates, prices fall, and unemployment increases, resulting in what is known as depression. When, on the other hand, business is profitable; that is, when it pays to produce goods and to engage in trade, depression gives way to prosperity.

#### COURSE OF THE BUSINESS CYCLE

The change from one phase of the cycle to another does not simultaneously affect all industries in all localities. Depression may affect one industry or a part of it, while there is general prosperity. A good example is furnished by the land boom, which may be described as a business cycle limited to a particular locality. During the boom, the price of land mounts far beyond its value as a source of income from current rents, continuing upward until the fear that it will go no higher becomes general. Thereupon follows a crisis or panic, and the attempts of all owners to sell out brings a collapse of the price structure. Sometimes the price of land may fall below its capitalized current rental value during the reaction. Many cities, especially new ones, have experienced land and building booms followed by sudden drops in the real estate market. Similarly, new industries sometimes overestimate the demand for their products and expand beyond their needs, as measured in potential profits. Such overexpansion must be followed by retrenchment and loss until a balance is restored.

The gold rush exemplifies the typical business cycle operating on a small scale. The sudden influx of people into the mining community, the scarcity of goods, and the feeling that riches await every comer combine to raise prices higher and higher. Because of the constantly increasing sums of money used in exchange, everyone feels prosperous. The break approaches when a few individuals sell their property and keep

the money. Others follow their example until there are more sellers than buyers. Prices fall, and the activities of trade decrease to the point where local industry will support it.

It is not the purpose of this book to present an explanation of the business cycle in its details.<sup>1</sup> The factors involved are too numerous and too complex to be dealt with in brief space. The descriptions given are intended merely to indicate in a general way how the business cycle works and to show how intimate a part of our economic system it is. Almost no modern economic activity is immune to this kind of change. The chances of eliminating business cycles appear at present to be too remote to be worth considering. We must therefore concern ourselves with the economic and social problems created by this phenomenon and with the adjustments which may be made in the mitigation of their evils.

#### ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE BUSINESS CYCLE

The high level of production kept up during the prosperity phase of the business cycle may well be regarded as a desirable effect. Since it is not maintained by overexertion, there seems to be no reason, so far as our industrial organization is concerned, why it should not continue at its highest level indefinitely. The curtailed production of the depression phase therefore results in a distinct loss to society. A reduction in the number of houses built, of suits sewed, or of loaves baked obviously results in a correspondingly reduced number of these articles available for consumption. Moreover, the inequitable distribution of goods is more keenly felt in a time of depression, since persons with incomes barely sufficient during prosperity cannot endure a reduction without suffering. The closing of factories due to unprofitableness of operation throws employees out of work, thereby diminishing their buying power so that still more factories must be closed. The vicious circle thus started may continue until a very considerable portion of the working population has no income at all.

<sup>1</sup> See Mitchell, Wesley C., *Business Cycles: The Problem and Its Setting*, 1927.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS

Although history clearly indicates that neither prosperity nor depression is likely to continue indefinitely, we have not as yet devised any rational method for anticipating the changes and adjusting ourselves to them. While the cycle is on the upward trend, unbounded optimism prevails. Arguments designed to prove that a permanent high level of prosperity has been reached are broadcast to bolster up the wish to believe in a new dispensation. Men buy property for which there is a ready market, merely in order that they may sell it later at a profit. The intrinsic value of the property or its utility to the buyer is of little import. If it appears likely that it will rise in price, it is a good "buy." Savings are brought out of hiding and "put to work" for their owners. The opportunity to make money on rising prices appeals to everyone. Even conservative business men are carried away with the popular enthusiasm. When at last the discrepancy between actual and speculative values becomes incredibly great, a few cautious persons withdraw from the market. When their actions become known, a wild fear seizes the speculators. The market drops like a plummet, and many lose the savings of a lifetime in the crash. When the cycle is on the downward trend, undue pessimism marks the general attitude toward business. Purchases are postponed in the expectation of further reductions in price. Money is hoarded as a means of making money, since on a falling market it increases in value with the passing of time. Fear of loss or unemployment prompts many to live with utmost frugality. The result is a lessened demand for economic goods and still further recession of prices. Production decreases still further. The suffering thus engendered is comparable in extent only with protracted famines, wars, and other large-scale calamities. Not all of this suffering is physical. Much of it grows out of the sense of insecurity that comes from an uncertain future. Prudence, thrift, and foresight are brought to naught by the changes of the business cycle. Men and women dare not marry, undertake to rear

children, or assume debts when they have no assurance that they will be able to fulfill their obligations. Happy living demands security of economic position. Without it, social relations are all but impossible to maintain.

#### REMEDIES

To propose a remedy which will leave our economic system in anything like its present form is difficult if not impossible. The profit motive is as inherent a part of our system as is the steam in a steam engine, and as long as it continues to determine the direction of economic endeavor, we are pretty sure to have the shifts in business which we find so distressing. Possibly something might be accomplished through the manipulation of money and credit. Disastrous falling of prices might be averted by increasing the amount of money in circulation, but this plan would have to include a reduction of the amount of money during the period of rising prices, a remedy which we do not have the courage to apply. Instead, we have contented ourselves with doing something toward rehabilitating the victims of depression—the individuals who through unemployment or property loss have no longer any claim on the economic product of society.

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## CHILD LABOR

OUR growing knowledge of the effects of environment, especially that of the early years, upon the subsequent welfare of the individual has led us to recognize as a social problem conditions which adversely influence health and the development of the person. Conspicuous among these conditions is the working life of women and children. The members of these groups are not so well able to defend themselves as are men, consequently they are more easily exploited. Without protection they may suffer injuries of so permanent a nature as to lead to deterioration of the race. Important as this fact may be for the future of society, it has served only as a secondary cause for our interest in the protection of children and women. The main reason is to be found in the development of humanitarianism, through which we have come to recognize the similarity of all human beings and to sympathize with their sufferings as if they were our own.

## CHILD LABOR—HISTORICAL

In the primitive stages of culture there was no child labor problem. Children were taught the arts of making a living, but were not expected to exercise them before attaining the requisite growth and strength. Child labor made its first appearance with the attainment of civilization, when specialization in occupation and divisions of class and caste created social distances too wide for an elementary sympathy to bridge. It is hardly to be expected that children as a class will fare better than their parents, and when these belong to an unfree proletariat, owing personal service to their overlord, the children will escape labor only so long as their services are too small to be valuable. Through the long centuries of the

Middle Ages, therefore, work was the lot of the poor children of Europe. They were employed as generally and quite as early in life as they were later under the factory system.<sup>1</sup> With the institution of the craft guilds, working conditions were much improved for that portion of the juvenile population which was able to take advantage of the training and protection offered. Custom and the rules of the guilds enforced a certain amount of consideration for the apprentices by those masters who sought to exploit them unduly. After the passage of the Statute of Artificers in England in 1562, apprenticeship was required in that country of all who wished to engage in any craft or trade.<sup>2</sup> The benefits derived from the operation of this law were not limited to the maintenance of satisfactory working conditions for child workers, but included also provision for vocational education.

With the coming of the machine and the factory, the relations of employer and employee underwent radical changes. In England, where the Industrial Revolution began toward the close of the eighteenth century, the effects upon child workers were first observed. The Statute of Artificers had been increasingly disregarded since about 1650,<sup>3</sup> though the mechanism of apprenticeship still survived. Unmindful of the difference between factory and workshop, the authorities continued to apply the rules of the handicraft economy to the new system. Children were apprenticed to masters as before, though the "masters" were now cotton mill owners, some of whom never entered the mills and certainly did not know personally all the workers. Service in the mills could scarcely, by any reach of the imagination, be regarded as vocational training. To a few might come the opportunity for promotion to an overseer's position, but all the rest were destined to be turned out at adulthood with only the knowledge of a children's trade, in which employment at a living wage could not be secured, since a new supply of children could be had for less. The

<sup>1</sup> See Dunlop, O. Jocelyn, and Denman, Richard D., *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour*, 1912, pp. 15, 19, 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

parish authorities, burdened with pauper children, were so glad to find a means of getting rid of them that they did not question too closely the conditions of work and living which awaited their wards.

These children were consigned to their employers at the age of seven and upwards, till they were twenty-one. Next door to the mills prentice-houses were built, and in these two buildings their young lives were spent, at best in monotonous toil, at worst in a hell of human cruelty. If their master failed in business, their labours ceased and they were cast adrift on the world. A model mill at Styall near Manchester employed from seventy to eighty children procured from the Liverpool workhouse, living in a small prentice-house near the mill. Here, where kindness was the rule, and the children's education was supervised by members of the owner's family noted for its benevolence, the working hours were seventy-four a week or over twelve hours a day, Saturdays included. The majority of the mills worked fifteen hours. In many of them, work, like the stream, never stopped by day or night, and the children who had tended the machines by day crept into beds just left vacant by the children who were to tend them through the night. For this system of double shifts, in spite of its unhealthiness, it could indeed be said that the children's hours were shortened by the fact that there were other workers to replace them, and that the night children had the compensation of time to play by day.<sup>4</sup>

The unhappy life described above was not confined to pauper children. The wages of adult workers were so low that parents could not earn enough to support themselves and their children without the help of the latter. Poor relief was refused to families with unemployed children. Parents were forced to put their young children into the mill as the alternative to starvation or loss of their children by way of the workhouse and the indenture. The widespread employment of children in the mills apparently inured the people in general to the hardships it entailed, so that they came to accept it as tolerable, if not altogether desirable. The resulting lack of

<sup>4</sup> Hammond, J. L. and Barbara, *The Town Labourer 1760-1832*, pp. 145-6. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1917.

consideration for children led to the appearance of the most objectionable forms of child labor in certain trades outside the factory, notably in coal mining and chimney sweeping.

In the United States, as in England, child labor came to attention with the introduction of the factory. This is not to say that child labor did not exist previously. The records indicate that the binding out of children who lacked adequate means and guardianship was a common practice in Colonial America.<sup>5</sup> Since the services of children were offered as the inducement to secure masters, it may be taken for granted that heavy labor was exacted of many of the "apprentices" under this arrangement. However, the problem of child labor did not attain such large proportions in this country as in England, because of circumstances which gave the workers more independence of action. In the first place, industrialization developed more slowly in America, allowing more time for transition. Workers were not suddenly faced with the necessity of giving up their old trades and going into the mill for whatever wage the operator offered. Secondly, the unoccupied lands of America, upon which a self-sufficing agriculture could be practiced, provided a means of escape from unsatisfactory conditions of employment. If wages were too low or hours too long, any man could take his family to the West, there to establish himself far from the control of employers. The draining off of the population to the West during the early years of industrialization tended to result in a shortage of workers, which kept wages high and conditions of labor fairly good. Nevertheless, serious evils arose, which were allowed to exist for many years before anything was done in the way of effective legal regulation to reduce them.

#### NUMBER OF CHILD WORKERS

A century has passed since our first recognition of a child labor problem in America. In that time, attitudes toward it have changed greatly and we have eliminated many of its most

<sup>5</sup> Abbott, Grace, *The Child and the State*, 1938, Vol. I, pp. 189-212.



revolting features, but we still had two thirds of a million child workers in 1930, according to the United States Census. This figure is almost certainly an understatement of the actual number; first, because it takes no account of children under ten years of age and, second, because of the reluctance with which parents or guardians will admit that their children are employed, especially if the employment is in violation of the law. A comparison of the decennial Census Reports since 1880 shows a much smaller decrease of child labor than would be expected in view of the fact that practically all child labor legislation in force has been enacted since that time. It cannot be maintained, therefore, as some of the opponents of further legislation have alleged, that child labor is no longer a problem worthy of our attention.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILD WORKERS

The number of boys gainfully employed is about twice that of girls, the majority of both sexes being near the upper age limit of the groups included. The proportion of children employed varies in the different sections of the United States. The highest rates are found in what is commonly called the Old South; the lowest on the Pacific Coast. Rates above the average are found in the industrialized portions of New England. It should be noted that totals and rate calculations apply only to children between the ages of ten and fifteen, inclusive, whereas it could be demonstrated that many persons somewhat older are yet too young to begin their life of toil. If we count all workers between ten and eighteen, inclusive, we find the Census totals reach about two millions, with a somewhat uneven distribution throughout the country by area and by sex.

Many different kinds of work are done by children, but more than three fifths of those counted in the Census of 1930 were in agriculture. Since some of these work on the home farm and since farm work is conducted out-of-doors and is seasonal in nature, it has been generally assumed that children so employed are not in need of legal protection. This assumption is not always justified; ignorant or greedy parents may be

among the hardest taskmasters. Certainly the general exception of agricultural employment from regulation is not in keeping with good practice in child labor legislation. The following selections show how the child worker fares when conditions are unfavorable in various occupations.

Tomato peeling was the occupation in which the largest number of the children were engaged, 337 (90 per cent) of the 374 girls and 55 (19 per cent) of the 288 boys. Can boys and can girls were the next in number, 132 (46 per cent) of the boys and 11 girls.

Few girls were employed in any other work. Ten sorted lima beans (5 of these working on the line), 4 husked corn by hand, 4 packed tomatoes, 6 sorted tomatoes on the line, and 1 salted and 1 juiced tomatoes. No girls operated machines.

The boys had a greater variety of work. Eleven operated power machines, which were usually operated by adults, 6 running closing machines, 3 operating the scalders, 1 a filling machine, and 1 a corn-silking machine. A number of other boys worked in close contact with machinery, though they did not actually operate the machines. Seventeen were "piling in"; that is, they stood at the end of the line and caught the hot cans which came off the closing machine and piled them into iron crates, an occupation that requires constant lifting and stooping and a good deal of strength. One 17-year-old boy who was "piling in" placed his hand too near the machinery, so that his finger was caught and the nail torn off. Ten other boys, though not actually operating machines, were employed in such jobs as watching the filling machine or taking tomatoes off the scalding machine. Ten boys were employed in light work "on the line," watching, straightening, salting, or juicing the cans. Seven others were doing other types of light work, sorting tomatoes, making cartons, or stamping and stenciling cases in the warehouse. Most of the remaining 49 boys had jobs that demanded exertion and strength. Eleven boys were "carriers," or "pan boys"—that is, they carried pans or pails of tomatoes or waste from one operation to another; and 3 "pushed skins"—that is, pushed the waste with wooden paddles on the floors into the gutters. Sixteen were engaged in piling and stacking filled cans in the warehouse and 11 others in trucking and carrying, including a few who did comparatively light work such as carrying empty boxes and others who did heavy work such as pulling racks on which catsup bottles were stacked or trucking crates or cases of filled cans from the cooker to the warehouse or from the warehouse to freight cars for shipping.

All but 3 of the girls under 12 and all of those under 10 years were employed as peelers, and the majority of the younger boys were also engaged in this occupation. Fifteen boys under 12, however, including 6 under 10 years of age, were employed in various other occupations about the cannery, some in heavy jobs for young children. Two boys of 10 and 1 of 11 years caught the hot cans as they came from the closing machine and piled them into crates; 1 boy of 11 was employed in a tomato cannery to push the filled baskets away from the end of the scalding; 1 boy of 8 years and 2 of 9 years carried empty wooden boxes from the warehouse to the cannery, and 2 boys of 9 were employed to pack filled cans in cases. One boy of 11 was found operating a scalding machine, a responsible job usually filled by an adult.<sup>6</sup>

The conditions of urban child labor are illustrated by the following:

A metropolitan daily requires the following. First it selects the route and designates the number of customers the child is to be responsible for. Second, the child agrees in advance to pay whatever the newspaper asks ("... prices subject to change by the newspaper on its posting a notice ..."). Third, the child agrees to pay weekly, and to be responsible for "any amount that the subscriber has agreed to pay" under, for example, a combination newspaper sale and insurance plan. As to bad risks, even though a subscriber may refuse to pay, the carrier "shall have no authority to cancel a subscription." Fourth, the child agrees to deliver free any advertising matter that is consigned to him, not merely to his own customers but to anyone living "within the locality." Fifth, the child agrees not to handle any other newspaper published in the city within thirty days after the termination of his contract. The contract is to run for five years, and the newspaper may terminate it on twenty-four hours notice, but the child only on fifteen days' notice. Besides, there is a bond which the child has to deposit with the company to cover possible breach of contract, and this the child cannot get back until thirty days after he has left employment.<sup>7</sup>

#### CAUSES OF CHILD LABOR

Children, like adults, are disposed to follow the lines of least resistance in their activities. If they work, it is because they

<sup>6</sup> Matthews, Ellen Nathalic, *Children in Fruit and Vegetable Canneries*, United States Children's Bureau Publication No. 198, 1930, pp. 39-41. The selection quoted refers to canneries of Delaware.

<sup>7</sup> Lumpkin, Katharine D., and Douglas, Dorothy W., *Child Workers in America*. pp. 48-9. New York: Robert M. McBride & Company, 1937.

find working the most satisfactory or the least unsatisfactory thing to do in the circumstances. When we speak of the causes of child labor, we are referring to these circumstances—the conditions favorable to the practice of child labor—not to factors which inevitably produce it. Such compelling factors are rare. A well-enforced law could prevent child labor without disturbing the “causes” at all.

The real cause is to be found in our attitude toward the employment of children. As long as the accepted solution to certain problems is child labor, it will appear whenever these problems are present. If we did not believe that the natural and normal activity of underprivileged children is work, some other provision would be made to supply the necessities of life for them and for the persons forced under our system to become their dependents.

Among the conditions commonly regarded as causes of child labor, poverty is frequently mentioned. Child workers themselves give poverty as the reason for their going to work, and numerous investigations have borne out the truth of their statements. When the father is out of work or is ill, injured, or dead, the duty of providing for the family falls by custom upon the children who are old enough to be able to get jobs. Cases of this kind most frequently arise among families at the foot of the economic scale. The occupations of the men in this group commonly require great exertion under conditions unfavorable to a long and healthy life. If the worker is not more unfortunate, he may be cast aside as worn out by the time he is forty-five. The wages have been too small to permit savings sufficient to keep the family when income ceases or even to tide over an emergency. The group falls back upon its one remaining resource, the earnings of the children. The approval of society for this course is indicated by the exemptions in child labor laws which permit children under age to work in case of extreme emergency.

Poverty also results in child labor through the desires of the children themselves for greater material enjoyments than their parents can provide. Working children have better clothes, more spending money, and a higher status than the nonworkers

of the same economic level. They have the air of independence that goes with being self-supporting in a group where self-support is highly regarded. They are almost equal to adults in abilities and privileges. Their example arouses the envy of those who do not share their position. In such circumstances, the unemployed dependent child cannot be expected to resist the lure of a job in the mill.

Through the operation of the belief that immediate earnings are more important than training and education, poverty may be perpetuated indefinitely both as a cause and as an effect of child labor. If poverty forces a child into employment before he has had time to learn a trade, he is likely to remain poor. His low earning power, kept low by his lack of training, will in turn force his children to go the same way. Unless this vicious circle is broken by drastic social action, it may continue until a caste is developed, the children of which are doomed permanently to premature labor.

#### COMPETITION IN INDUSTRY

Since business is conducted for profit, it follows that only the exceptional employer will pay more than necessary for his workers. If, as is frequently the case, the employer is the agent of a corporation or of owners other than himself, his duty to them plainly requires him to pay no higher wages than he must. Furthermore, if by hiring children he can get more work done for a given amount of money than by hiring adults, his course of action is easily foreseen. He will employ children. So will all other employers whose businesses are conducted according to the most efficient methods. Now and then a manufacturer will sacrifice some of his profits out of sympathy for his employees, but such cases must occur rarely in a system dominated by the motive of gain.

The result is the deliberate encouragement of child labor by industry. When the work to be done is of such character that it can be done by children, these may be offered employment, especially if they can be had for much lower wages than adults. Children are sometimes more economical as employees for

reasons quite apart from the nature of the work to be done. They are ignorant and inexperienced, consequently less likely to ask for increases in pay or to insist upon healthful working conditions. They are unable to organize unions or associations for the protection of their interests. They almost never go on strike. They make no trouble if they are laid off or discharged.

#### LACK OF INTEREST IN SCHOOL

Inasmuch as the first schools were designed for members of the leisure classes, it is not surprising that they have retained certain characteristics which render them unsuited to children of workers. This is true in spite of the fact that public education was largely the result of the demand of the workers themselves. Emphasis upon purely esthetic values in education, to the exclusion of the practical and the utilitarian, has caused many members of the working classes to look upon school attendance as a waste of time or worse. From their viewpoint, the school not only teaches nothing useful; it cultivates tastes in its pupils which they cannot gratify without increments of wealth and leisure impossible to hope for. The result is the creation of discontent without any provision for its alleviation. The children learn early to share the beliefs of their parents regarding education. They receive no praise at home for achievements in school; no encouragements to help them over difficult places. They easily fall behind in their school work. The coercive methods applied by many teachers to induce more intensive application to studies breaks the slight connection that holds the working-class children in school. Once out, they are brought back only with difficulty.

#### MORAL AND EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF WORK

Apparently as a vestige of the puritanical notion that play is wicked, we occasionally encounter in parents and others the belief that work *per se* is good for children. Work is said to yield educational benefits as well as profit and to aid in the development of character. Sometimes men of the working

class who have had some degree of success in business believe their success due to the hardships they endured in their childhood.

Obviously, there is a suggestion of truth in these ideas. Children need to learn gradually to accept the responsibilities of adulthood, not the least of which is the making of a living. Therefore, no criticism can be made justly of the practice of giving children useful tasks to perform. Harm results, however, when the tasks are of such routine character that nothing can be learned from doing them, when the work requires strength and endurance beyond the child's powers, or when the work entails absence from school and consequent neglect of education. The ideal to be sought here is the middle ground between idleness and overwork.

#### EFFECTS OF CHILD LABOR

Certain kinds of work and certain conditions under which work is done are admittedly harmful to children. There is difference of opinion as to the exact point where social regulation should enter to protect the child worker, but it is generally agreed that the presence of one or more of the following conditions renders work unsuited to young children: long hours; employment at night; work requiring great strength or endurance; monotonous tasks; unguarded machinery; air in workrooms contaminated with dust, lint, or fumes; extremes of temperature or humidity; work with poisonous materials; and contact with an immoral social environment.

Most of the injuries inflicted upon the child by adverse conditions of employment may be conveniently divided into two classes: namely, injuries to physical development and injuries to social and personal development. Under the former will be found retardation or checking of normal growth due to excessive fatigue from long hours and insufficient sleep or from doing work too heavy for young muscles. Here also will be found a long list of occupational diseases, such as lead poisoning, tuberculosis, dermatitis, and neuritis, as well as cuts, bruises, and other accidental injuries incurred while at work. Because

of their greater susceptibility, children are more likely to be diseased or hurt than are adults. "Information from 16 states shows that more than 20,000 workers under 18 are injured each year. Of these 1,000 are maimed for life and 100 are killed."<sup>8</sup>

The effects of unsatisfactory working conditions upon the child's personal development are even more damaging, if possible, than the effects upon his physique. Denied the opportunity to become equipped with a trade or other skilled occupation, he is forced to remain in the ranks of the unskilled and the low-paid all his life. His ambition to achieve economic success is stifled by the almost insurmountable barrier of ignorance. For lack of a general education, he is unable to become informed on matters with which, as a citizen, he should be familiar. He cannot acquire an appreciation of literature, music, or other art and consequently is denied much of the joy of living. If he is engaged in the street trades or in certain kinds of messenger service, he may become delinquent as a result of the social contacts he is obliged to make. Finally, child labor robs its victims of their childhood, a period which nearly everyone will agree should consist in large part of happy, care-free play.

#### REMEDIES

Except for a small amount of rather ineffectual propaganda designed to create social attitudes unfavorable to child labor, all efforts to regulate or prevent it have been directed toward the legislatures. In England, the concern of a few public-spirited individuals resulted, after long agitation, in the passage of the first child labor law.

The Act prescribed that all cotton or woolen mills or factories where three or more apprentices or twenty or more other persons worked, must be kept clean and airy. Most of the provisions applied only to apprentices. These children were not to work more than twelve hours a day, exclusive of meal times, and these hours must be taken between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. Night work was pro-

<sup>8</sup> Lumpkin, Katharine D., and Douglas, Dorothy W., *Child Workers in America*, 1937, p. 42.



hibited after June, 1803, except in the case of the bigger mills, which were given from six months to a year to prepare for the change. Part of the working day was to be given up to instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic: each apprentice was to have one new suit of clothing every year, and boys and girls were to sleep in separate rooms and not more than two in a bed. The Act made ample provision for their religious duties: for an hour every Sunday they were to be "instructed and examined in the principles of the Christian religion, by some proper person provided by the master or mistress"; once a month, at least, they were to go to church, and in England they were to be confirmed, in Scotland they were to receive sacrament, between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. The Justices of the Peace at their Quarter Sessions were to appoint two visitors, unconnected with the mills, one a magistrate, the other a clergyman, who should have full power to inspect the mills and enforce the Act.<sup>9</sup>

The above-described law is of interest because it represents the first attempt at legal regulation of child labor in the factory system. It was too limited in scope to have much effect in preventing child labor. Its enforcement, moreover, depended too much upon local officials to be effective. Nevertheless, it marked the recognition in the English public conscience of society's duty to its helpless members and thus provided a first step into the field of social legislation.

The continued suffering of child workers and the failure of the law to offer them relief led to vigorous agitation, championed by Sir Robert Peel and Robert Owen, for the enactment of a more inclusive and more drastic law. Several unsuccessful bills were introduced into Parliament between 1815 and 1819. In the latter year the Cotton Factories Act was passed.

By this Act, which applied to cotton mills and factories only, no child under nine was to be employed, and for children between the ages of nine to sixteen the factory hours were to be limited to thirteen and a half, of which half an hour was to be spent on breakfast and one hour on dinner, leaving twelve, or the same number as that allowed by the 1802 Act, for actual work. Night work was also forbidden. . . . The great blemish of the Act was that it left the old arrangement for inspection by a magistrate and a clergy-

<sup>9</sup> Hammond, J. L. and Barbara, *The Town Labourer, 1760-1832*, pp. 151-2. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1917.

man unchanged, thus destroying its whole efficacy. An amending Act allowing greater latitude for overtime was passed next year (1820), but, except for the purpose of relieving employers with specially sensitive consciences, this Act was unnecessary, for the 1819 measure was a dead letter.<sup>10</sup>

In 1833 an act was passed prohibiting the employment of children under 9 in all textile mills, limiting the working hours of children under 13 to 9 hours a day and 48 hours a week and those of young persons between 13 and 18 to 12 hours a day, or 69 hours a week, and providing for the appointment of factory inspectors. This was the first law to provide for a system of factory inspection.

In 1842, as the result of a striking parliamentary inquiry into the conditions of labor in mines, an act was passed prohibiting the employment of boys under 10, and of all girls and women, in mine pits, and requiring the appointment of inspectors to enforce the law.

By the act of 1844 work on certain dangerous machines was prohibited for children. At the same time the "half-time" system in the textile industries was established, whereby children worked and attended school alternately.

In the period 1845-1878 an act was passed raising the age and hours standards and gradually extending their application to all kinds of manufacturing industries.

Laws relating to child labor passed during the period between 1878 and the present day have been chiefly concerned with raising the age, hour, and educational standards of child labor in factories and workshops and with extending such standards to mercantile pursuits, street trades, and other occupations. By an act passed in 1901 the employment of children under 12 years of age was prohibited in factories or workshops.

In 1918 The Fisher Education Act was passed, which provided for the first time for the regulation of the employment of children in all gainful occupations, *including agriculture and domestic service*. It not only prohibited the employment of all children under 12 but also required compulsory full-time school attendance of all children up to 14 years of age, and compulsory continuation-school attendance of all children up to 16 years of age, the age to be raised to 18 at the end of seven years from the time the continuation-school section of the act became effective.

In 1920 a law was passed putting into effect the draft conventions

<sup>10</sup> Hammond, J. L. and Barbara, *The Town Labourer, 1760-1832*, p. 169. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1917.

relating to the employment of children adopted at the Washington and Genoa International Labor Conferences, thus establishing a minimum age of 14 for work in factories and workshops.<sup>11</sup>

#### EARLY REGULATION IN THE UNITED STATES

The recognition of the evils of child labor in America, as in England, preceded adequate legislation by many years. The earliest laws specifically dealing with the question were designed to provide for working children the education they were denied by reason of their employment. In 1813, Connecticut passed a law requiring mill owners employing children to provide instruction for them during a specified time each day. A Massachusetts law, passed in 1836, required three months' school attendance yearly of all children between 12 and 15 employed in factories.<sup>12</sup> Several other States had passed similar laws by 1860.<sup>13</sup>

After the first few years, emphasis on the protection of children shifted, along with the demands of labor in general, from education standards to an effort to secure more leisure. In 1842, Massachusetts limited the working hours of children under 12 employed in factories to ten per day. Connecticut passed a similar law the same year, and New Hampshire, Maine, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Ohio followed within a few years. About 1850, several of the northern manufacturing States prohibited the employment in factories of children below certain ages, the limits established varying from 13 to 9.

#### ARGUMENTS AGAINST REGULATION

At this stage of its development, child labor legislation encountered great opposition from persons interested in employing children. It was maintained that work is part of the general struggle for existence; to interfere with it is to defeat the

<sup>11</sup> United States Children's Bureau, *Child Labor*, Bureau Publication No. 197, 1930, pp. 3-4.

<sup>12</sup> Fuller, Raymond G., and Strong, Mabel A., *Child Labor in Massachusetts*, 1926, p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> United States Children's Bureau, *Child Labor*, Bureau Publication No. 197, 1930, p. 5.

operation of nature's excellent plans and therefore unwise. Besides, it was argued, work is not harmful to children. On the contrary, it has incomparable value as a disciplinary and educational factor. It keeps the children out of mischief and idleness. Moreover, to prohibit them from working is to rob them of their means of making a living or to rob their parents of the benefit of their labor, a treatment which is cruel and unjust. There were also those who held that industry could not thrive without child labor, especially in competition with foreign industry with its cheap labor supply. There were even some who suggested that since child workers were usually of foreign parentage, they belonged to an inferior group, which might properly be exploited.

#### THE TREND OF LEGISLATION

In spite of numerous objections, the labor of children has been circumscribed more and more as the States have legislated in this field. Beginning with a low age minimum, applied to manufacturing alone, the age limits have been raised, generally to 14, and in a few States even higher. Moreover, the law has been extended to include occupations other than manufacturing. Educational and health requirements have been established in about three fourths of the States. Compulsory school attendance laws have incidentally tended somewhat to reduce the number of child workers. The eight-hour day for children under 16 has been generally adopted, and 43 States prohibit the employment of children under 16 at night. Special legislation has been directed at occupations presenting extraordinary hazards to life, limb, health, or morals. Recently, better means of enforcement of child labor laws have been established through factory inspection and the requirement of employment certificates for all employed children.

#### PRESENT STATUS OF STATE CHILD LABOR REGULATION

All but two States have established a minimum age of 14 for employment in factories. Exceptions are so often permitted, however, that in practice many children below the

minimum are employed. Thirty-five States have established an age minimum of 16 or above for work in mines; many also include quarries. Most States prohibit children under 16 or 18, and sometimes 21, from employment in occupations presumed to be dangerous or injurious. Girls are given special protection under these laws. Every State now has compulsory school attendance laws; all but five require attendance to the age of 16 or above. Part-time attendance for employed children is required in twenty-seven States. Sixteen States issue employment certificates only to children who have completed grammar school; others have lower educational requirements, and ten States have none at all. Thirty-three States have provisions for physical examination of children before they go to work; in twenty-five of these the examination is mandatory. The eight-hour day for children under 16 in factories or stores has been established as the maximum in thirty-seven States. Nine States still permit children between 14 and 16 to work from 9 to 11 hours a day, and one, Georgia, does not regulate the length of the working day for children. In the case of Georgia, however, some regulation of the day is secured incidentally through the law providing for a 60-hour maximum week for all employees. Twenty-nine States limit child workers to a 48-hour week. All but three States have some form of prohibition of night work for children. In most cases, the regulation applies to the employment of children under 16 in factories and stores. In forty-five States and the District of Columbia, employment certificates must be secured by children working in factories. Fifteen States and the District of Columbia have laws requiring children in street trades to secure permits or badges. Girls are usually given more protection than boys; in many States girls are prohibited from engaging in street trades. Thirty States have no street-trades laws applying to boys.

Many of the forty-four States which have workmen's compensation laws make special provisions for minors, usually by allowing them a larger compensation than their earnings at the time of injury would justify if calculated on the same basis

as for adults. Most States do not distinguish between minors legally and illegally employed; that is, the compensation laws apply equally to both classes. In seven States, however, compensation is increased from 50 to 200 per cent if the injured minor is illegally employed, while in sixteen other States the minor illegally employed is not eligible to compensation. Minimum wage laws applicable to minors have been passed by about one third of the States, but due to the doubtful constitutionality of such legislation it has been poorly enforced and is not likely to become a generally accepted method of regulating child labor.

### FEDERAL REGULATION

The growth of popular interest in federal restriction of child labor is reflected in the platforms of our political parties. The Prohibition party in 1872 was the first political group of any importance to include a clause against child labor in its party platform. The Democratic convention of 1892 introduced a plank which read, "We are in favor of the enactment by states of laws abolishing contract convict labor, and for prohibiting the employment in factories of children under fifteen years of age." In 1904 the Socialist party first pledged itself "to watch and work, in both the economic and the political struggle for the complete education of children and their freedom from the workshop." In 1912 the Republican and Progressive parties declared for a *federal* child-labor law, and in 1916 both the Democratic and the Republican parties stood for the immediate enactment of such a law.

The first attempt to pass a federal law was in 1906, when the Beveridge-Parsons bill was introduced in Congress in December. This provided that the carriers of interstate commerce, the railroads and steamboat lines, should not transport the products of any factory or mine that employed or permitted the labor of children under fourteen years of age. In January, 1907, Senator Beveridge made his famous three-day speech for the bill, but without success. This bill was again presented in 1907 and was later added as an amendment of the District of Columbia child-labor bill but failed to come to a vote in either house. Senator Lodge also proposed a similar bill in 1907; this was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor, but was never reported. The Kenyon bill, another virtual repetition of the Beveridge bill, was presented in every Congress until 1914.

In December, 1912, and again in 1914, the progressive element introduced the Copley-Poindexter bill. This defined as "anti-social child labor" the employment of a child under fourteen in any mill, factory, cannery, workshop, manufacturing or mechanical establishment, or of a child under sixteen in any mine or quarry, or in any dangerous, injurious or immoral occupation, and prohibited the shipment in interstate commerce of the products of such labor. While this bill was still being considered, the Palmer-Owen bill was introduced. This differed from any of the preceding bills. Instead of putting the burden upon the carrier, it made it a misdemeanor for the producer, for the man who was responsible for the labor itself being employed, to put into interstate commerce the products of any mine or quarry where children under sixteen were employed, the products of any mill, cannery, workshop, factory, or manufacturing establishment in which children under fourteen were employed, or in which children between fourteen and sixteen were employed more than eight hours a day, or between 7 o'clock at night and 6 o'clock in the morning. This bill was passed by the House on February 15, 1915, by a vote of 233 to 43, but was killed in the Senate on the last day of the session.

Finally the Keating-Owen bill, repeating the substance of the Palmer-Owen bill, was signed by the President on September 1, 1916, and went into effect September 1, 1917, only to be declared unconstitutional June 3, 1918. This was a check but not a defeat. If federal legislation could not be achieved through use of the power over interstate commerce, there were thought to be other ways of bringing about the same result. On November 15, 1918, Senator Pomerene introduced the federal taxing measure as an amendment to the Revenue Act. The standards were exactly the same as those established by the first federal child labor law, but the new law was based on the taxing power of Congress—a tax of 10 per cent in excess of all other taxes to be levied upon the entire net profits from the sale or disposition of products of mills, canneries, workshops, factories, manufacturing establishments, mines or quarries employing children contrary to the specific standards laid down by the act. This measure, passed February 24, 1919, and effective April 25, 1919, was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court on May 15, 1922.<sup>14</sup>

The failure of the two attempts to secure control of child labor by Federal legislation led at once to an attempt, sponsored

<sup>14</sup> Fuller, Raymond G., *Child Labor and the Constitution*, pp. 236-8. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1923.

by the National Child Labor Committee, to introduce an amendment to the Federal constitution empowering the Congress to "limit, regulate, and prohibit the labor of persons under eighteen years of age." The amendment passed both houses of Congress with little difficulty, but was promptly defeated by the State legislatures. The opponents of the measure held that it gave Congress too much power, that it robbed parents or States of their rights, and that it was unnecessary.

Discouraged by defeat, the advocates of the child labor amendment returned to work for better laws in the several States. The indifferent success of their efforts became apparent during the years of depression following 1930, when, in the face of widespread unemployment, the number of child workers increased. The evil of this situation was recognized by the framers of the National Recovery Administration, and regulations forbidding child labor were adopted. The invalidation of the National Recovery Administration by the Supreme Court and the threatened return of child labor created a situation in which it seemed possible once more to secure the ratification of the child labor amendment to the Federal constitution. Fourteen States voted for it in one year. The forces of opposition, however, suddenly organized. Several patriotic societies, including the Sons of the Confederacy and the Daughters of the American Revolution,<sup>15</sup> organizations of industrialists, bar associations, and some of the Christian churches, all freely supported by the newspapers, launched a campaign which resulted in the defeat of the amendment, first in New York and Massachusetts; subsequently in all the States which had not previously taken action on the question.

Recent changes in the attitude of the United States Supreme Court, as indicated in some of the decisions handed down in 1937, have encouraged the advocates of Federal control once more to attempt regulation by Congressional action under the interstate commerce clause of the Constitution. The result is embodied in the child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Stand-

<sup>15</sup> Lumpkin, Katharine D., and Douglas, Dorothy W., *Child Workers in America*, 1937, pp. 207-8.



ards Act of 1938. These provisions, although applicable only to industries engaged in interstate trade, have already demonstrated their effectiveness as a means of protection to young workers.

#### INTERNATIONAL REGULATION OF CHILD LABOR

The International Labor Conference, established by the League of Nations, has at several of its annual meetings adopted draft conventions regulating child labor. These conventions have included recommendations for minimum ages for child workers, prohibition of night work and of child labor in certain industries, and minimum wage rates.<sup>10</sup> The value of these recommendations does not come from their enforcement, but from their educational influence. They serve as a standard or ideal toward which the whole industrial world may move, so that at some time in the distant future the child worker may be emancipated.

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<sup>10</sup> United States Children's Bureau, *Child Labor*, Bureau Publication No. 197, 1930, pp. 9-11.

## THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN

ACCORDING to a view popular among anthropologists, the earliest division of labor was based upon sexual differences in the population. Primitive men were engaged chiefly in hunting or other active occupations, while their wives carried on the routine tasks of cooking, farming, and housebuilding. If the arrangement seems to us to have been unfair to the women, we must recall that the conditions of primitive life made it inevitable. The survival of the group depended upon the success of the chase or of the battle, activities in which the greater strength, agility, and endurance of the male were prime requirements. The women were obliged to remain with the small children and consequently could not undertake work which might keep them away from home for long periods. The drudgery of housekeeping naturally fell to their lot. It should be made clear, however, that although work was divided between men and women the assignment of particular jobs was not the same in all primitive societies.

## HISTORY OF WOMEN'S WORK

The division between men's work and women's work, first made in prehistoric days, remained fairly distinct until the home ceased to be the chief locus of industry. As long as the two sexes kept to their separate spheres, society recognized no problem in connection with women as workers. Undoubtedly there were many instances of injury through excessively hard work or strain during the period in which home was the factory. Heavy labor in the field must have been quite as harmful to the women of a hundred years ago as is heavy factory labor of the present. The fact that workers in certain household industries were all, or almost all, women may possibly have

served in some measure to prevent serious and continued abuse through the maintenance of task limits suitable to the strength of women, but more than likely the problem of working women remained submerged as a result of the acceptance of the inferior status of women in general, rather than as a result of satisfactory working conditions.

For many centuries, the slow process by which the sexual division of labor was being obliterated did not remove women from the home. With the disappearance of hunting and the decline of fighting as their chief activities, men engaged in animal husbandry, agriculture, housebuilding, and various manufacturing occupations, formerly carried on largely by women. Still left in the home were enough tasks to keep women busy. Men, too, it must be recalled, did their work at home. The tools and simple machines in use were comparatively few and cheap. Every workman owned all the devices necessary to his trade, and naturally kept them at home, this being the most convenient place. The introduction of machinery too large and too expensive for every workman to own, together with the use of mechanical power, marked the cessation of domestic industry for men and began the process of taking the women from the home.

When the workman enters the factory, he no longer has control over the conditions under which he does his work. Instead of having a product to sell, he has only his labor, a fact of almost infinite significance. For labor, unlike other commodities, cannot be stored when the price is low and sold in large quantity when the price becomes high. The laborer, moreover, is inseparable from the labor which he must sell to live. These new conditions imposed upon the working class affected all members of the group but were most serious in their effects upon women and children. We have considered the problems of the latter in Chapter 17; in the present chapter we shall deal with problems incidental to the employment of women.

As in the case of child labor, the problem first came to attention in England, where women were extensively employed in

the cotton mills. The following description shows some of the consequences of the absence of women from the home.

The factory woman has had no time, no means, no opportunities of learning the common duties of domestic life. "Even if she had acquired the knowledge, she has still no time to practise them. In addition to the twelve hours' labour is an additional absence from home in the going and returning. Here is the young mother absent from her child above twelve hours daily. And who has charge of the infant in her absence? Usually some little girl or aged woman, who is hired for a trifle and whose services are equivalent to the reward. Too often the dwelling of the factory family is no home; it sometimes is a cellar, which includes no cookery, no washing, no baking, no mending, no decencies of life, no invitations to the fireside." . . . The greater part of the Working and lower class of people have not wives that can dress a joint of meat if they were to have it given them. The consequence is that such articles become their food that are the most easily acquired, consequently their general food now consists of bread and cheese.<sup>1</sup>

Besides being employed in the mills, women were also found in the coal mines of England toward the end of the eighteenth century. Usually their work consisted in drawing filled baskets to the shaft from the spot where the coal was cut off the seam. In some instances, however, the women worked along with the men. That this practice did not continue long was probably due as much to the ineptness of women for this kind of work as to a regard for their welfare.

#### WOMEN'S WAGE WORK IN AMERICA

The factory system developed somewhat later and more gradually in the United States than in England. Because of English laws forbidding both the exportation of machines and the emigration of persons skilled in their manufacture or operation, cotton mills were at first established in America under great difficulties. Nor were they encouraged by the presence of a large, cheap labor supply. The ease with which any man could secure land and set himself up as an independent farmer prevented the development of a proletariat. Wages regarded as

<sup>1</sup> Hammond, J. L. and Barbara, *The Town Labourer, 1760-1832*, pp. 23-4. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1917.

too high by factory owners were demanded by workmen as the price of their freedom. At the same time, there were few opportunities for economic independence open to women. Confined by custom to the home, they were limited to domestic occupations, few of which could be classified as gainful.

The textile industry alone of those employing women was commercialized to any considerable extent before the erection of factories. Since most of the spinning and some of the weaving had been done by women in the home, it was only natural that they should continue to perform the same tasks in the factory. The advent of factory employment for women was looked upon by the people of the time as a great blessing. Besides its function as a preventer of idleness, then regarded as a vice, employment for women was expected to add greatly to the incomes of the working classes. The work was considered easy and light, especially suited to the limited strength of women, and they themselves doubtless enjoyed the novelty of receiving pay in real money for their work, even if they were obliged to give it to their husbands at once upon reaching home. In these circumstances, it was not to be expected that laws would soon be passed to protect women from exploitation.

The cotton-mill operatives of 1825 worked long hours in poorly ventilated and badly lighted rooms. In many instances, they endured much regulation of their private lives by their employers. They avoided degradation only by their educational and cultural interests, and by the fact that they stayed for comparatively short periods in the mills. Many young women combined millwork with schoolteaching. In spite of its hard demands, the early period of the cotton factory in America seems to have been largely free from the unsatisfactory conditions which have later developed.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, many women were employed in numerous industries, some of them becoming active in the labor movement of the time. They left their homes for the factories as soon as they were offered employment. The variety of work undertaken was not nearly so limited at this time as certain contemporary observations have

implied. Nothing is accurately known as to their numbers before 1850, but it appears that the proportion of women to men in manufacturing occupations had, long before that date, reached the figure which has obtained with little variation ever since, namely, about one to five. However, in particular instances the women often outnumbered the men. During the early years of their existence, the cotton mills employed from five to ten times as many women as men. The ratio in this industry has since changed so that women are now less numerous than men. In other employments, however, women have become relatively more numerous with the passage of time. The change is most conspicuous in the professional and clerical occupations. Apparently there is a tendency for the work of women to become more and more like that of men. According to the Census of 1930, the number of women over ten years of age gainfully employed is 10,752,116, or twenty-two per cent of the total population in this group. These working women are distributed occupationally as follows:

	PER CENT
Agriculture .....	8.5
Manufacturing and mechanical industries.....	17.5
Transportation and communication.....	2.6
Trade .....	9.0
Public service .....	.2
Professional service .....	14.2
Domestic and personal service .....	29.6
Clerical occupations .....	18.5

With the coming in large numbers of immigrant women, at first mostly Irish, shortly before the Civil War, the effects of long days in unwholesome atmospheres began to have more serious consequences. For the immigrant women, work in the mills was not an incidental matter. Unlike their predecessors, who came from New England farms, they could not stop and return to a comfortable home in the country when they became ill or weary. Many were married and had family cares in addition to their jobs. The deleterious effects of standing day after day beside a clattering machine in a hot, dusty mill became evident to observant persons interested in human welfare.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For an account of women in gainful occupations from Colonial days to 1905, see Abbott, Edith, *Women in Industry*, 1910.

CAUSAL FACTORS IN UNDESIRABLE WORKING CONDITIONS  
FOR WOMEN

The necessity for making a living virtually forces every worker to adapt himself to the prevailing economic system. Thus women, finding home industry no longer profitable, have had to go into the factory, where they could earn money but where they could exercise little control over the conditions of their labor. A number of factors combined to place them under great disadvantage as compared with male workers. Many of them look upon their work as temporary, something to keep busy with while waiting for marriage. The result is an unwillingness to spend the long time required for learning a skilled trade. Inability to fit into groups composed largely of men, together with prejudice on the part of the men, has served to keep women out of many skilled occupations which they could otherwise enter. They are therefore confined generally to the unskilled or partly skilled occupations, which naturally are not so well paid. Lack of organization among women, moreover, makes it difficult for them to force concessions from employers to the extent that men have done. Here again the attitude of women toward their work enters as an obstructing factor. In the expectation of working only a short time, few women are willing to make the sacrifices necessary to maintain a union. Furthermore, the fact that women do not remain at work so steadily as men interferes with the development of the spirit of loyalty and co-operation without which concerted action is impossible.

## HARMFUL EFFECTS OF WOMAN LABOR

The entrance of women into industry has adversely influenced social life in various ways. First may be noted the effects upon the women themselves. Overfatigue, besides the suffering it brings directly, decreases the individual's resistance to disease, thus indirectly increasing the morbidity and mortality rates. Occupational disease lowers the efficiency of its victims and shortens their lives. The poor health of the work-

ing mother is in part responsible for the higher infant death rate found among populations where the mothers are gainfully employed.

The long absence of the working woman from home interferes seriously with home and neighborhood life. She cannot properly care for her children, either physically or socially. If she has been employed since her early youth, she may be so ignorant of the arts of housekeeping as to conduct the establishment both unsatisfactorily and uneconomically. In such circumstances, home life may be so unpleasant for the family as to break up the group altogether. As for neighborhood life, it virtually ceases to exist in the absence of women. Upon them ordinarily falls the responsibility of building up and maintaining the friendly relations among the families of a locality which make it a neighborhood instead of merely a collection of people. That conditions may, however, be almost as bad when the work is done at home is shown by the following description:

The exploitation of women who have done industrial home work has been especially appalling. In squalid tenement homes that are badly heated and lighted, women driven by family need, and having little or no industrial experience, make or finish garments, string tags, card buttons, hooks and eyes, or safety pins, make garters, knit or embroider, and work on cheap jewelry, lampshades, flowers, powder puffs, paper boxes and bags, carpet rags, and toys for distressingly low wages. While 14 States have laws that limit the evils of industrial home work, the practice has increased with the general breaking down of employment standards in the recent years of depression. More and more employers, unable or unwilling to meet the overhead expenses necessary in operating a factory, are giving the work out to be done in homes at shockingly low wages.<sup>3</sup>

It has been argued that the employment of women at low wages has tended to drive down the wages of men, and thus really to lower the income of the working class as a whole or, at least, to keep it constant, so that women may be said to work

<sup>3</sup> United States Women's Bureau, *Women at Work*, 1933, p. 9.



for nothing. In some few instances this may be true, but on the whole it is probably not correct. If it were, we should expect to see women superseding men in all occupations in which the sexes come into competition. Not only has this failed to take place, but higher-paid men have in part replaced women in some industries, notably cotton manufacturing.

#### BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF WOMAN LABOR

Gainful occupations for women have had beneficial as well as harmful effects; on the whole, the gains may have been greater than the losses. For it is difficult to overestimate the value to an individual of economic independence in a world as individualistic as our own. This the working woman has secured, and from it as a base she has raised herself to a status unknown to the unpaid home worker of pre-industrial days. Instead of being forced by economic necessity into marriage, the modern woman may in some degree exercise her own inclinations in the choice of a husband. She may refuse marriage altogether without facing the unpleasant alternative of starvation. The same independence with which she chooses her husband remains a guarantee of reasonably good treatment at his hands after she becomes his wife. Consideration for the children or a sense of duty or the pressure of public opinion may keep her tied to a husband who abuses her, but the possibility of making her own living is always open as a means of escape if the situation becomes intolerable. The gain of status in the family has been extended by the modern woman into the larger community. Woman suffrage and the right to hold office would have been inappropriate if not impossible to a group in economic servitude. Citizenship may be said to have come to women by way of the pay envelope.

Greater economic efficiency has also resulted from the entrance of women into the world outside the home. Women, as well as men, differ in their tastes and capacities for work. To require all of them, regardless of these differences, to engage in the same kind of household tasks is to waste talent on the

one hand and to suffer from poor housekeeping on the other. There is no reason to suppose that every woman is by nature fitted to cook and sweep or to care for children. The freedom of women to choose their occupations not only makes them happier, but enables them to do the work they can do best, thus giving to them and to society the benefits of the division of labor.

#### LEGISLATION FOR WOMEN WORKERS

As long as women worked at home in large households, they could be relieved of their duties by other workers during periods of overfatigue, illness, or childbearing. With the coming of the factory, work and working hours were standardized, so that the working woman performed the same tasks day after day during the same hours. The human organism is not like a machine in all particulars. The amount of energy available varies from day to day even in the normal, healthy individual; illness may create a temporary inefficiency or even total incapacity. A person may be able to do 2,400 hours of work in a year who is not able to be in the factory from eight to five every weekday. In the interest of the worker it becomes necessary, therefore, to reduce the arduousness of the task and length of the day to such limits as will permit the regular participation of the average worker without harm to himself. The greater susceptibility of women to harm from overwork or overstrain demands regulations for women's work somewhat more specific and stringent than those for men. These special regulations make up what is generally known as labor legislation for women.

The earliest legislation on behalf of working women took the form of limiting the length of the working day. The first laws of this kind, passed in New Hampshire in 1847 and in Ohio in 1852, were unenforceable. These regulations were justified on the grounds not only that an excessive working day was injurious to the women themselves, but also that it harmed the race by lessening the efficiency of the women as childbearers.

At present, all the States but five have established limits on daily or weekly hours for women. In twenty States, however, workdays of ten or twelve hours are allowed under the law. Subsequent legislation includes numerous provisions designed to protect women who work. Illinois forbade the employment of women in mines in 1872, thereby leading the way to the exclusion of women from numerous dangerous occupations. Sixteen States have prohibited night work in some or all employments. All the States but one require employers to provide seats for women workers.<sup>4</sup>

In recognition of the inequalities of the pay received respectively by men and by women doing the same kind of work, minimum wage laws have been passed to aid women. Strong objections have been raised against this form of regulation, some of it coming from members of feminist organizations, who demand full equality between men and women and who see in minimum wage laws for women an abridgment of the freedom of contract. The same arguments have also been used against all forms of legislation designed to protect women.

Massachusetts passed the first law, in 1912. Fourteen States and the District of Columbia had similar laws by 1923, in which year the law of the District of Columbia was declared unconstitutional. Following the adverse decision of the Court, the several States which had minimum wages for women either repealed their laws or ceased trying to enforce them. In 1931, only eight States still retained their minimum wage laws.<sup>5</sup> At present it appears that the changed attitude toward minimum wage regulation in general will enable women to profit from this type of legislation.

Additional advantages for women workers have come through gradual elimination of prejudices against them, prejudices often embodied in laws and in official rules and regulations. Beginning with Oberlin in 1833, colleges have been opening their doors to women students, so that now their opportunities for higher education are practically as good as those

<sup>4</sup> United States Women's Bureau, *Women at Work*, 1933, p. 28.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

offered to men. Women have almost monopolized two professions, teaching and nursing, and are rapidly increasing their numbers in other professional fields as well. Since 1932, government employment has been theoretically open to women and men on an equal basis, except where women are clearly handicapped by their sex. A woman has been chosen to serve in the President's Cabinet; others have been appointed ministers to foreign countries.

For all this, the woman worker still has far to go before she achieves equality with men. The recent depression resulted in much unemployment among women, especially among white-collar groups; in discrimination against women over thirty years of age; in the breaking down of the already inadequate wages of the low-paid groups, though these wages were only from one-half to three-fourths as high as those of men in corresponding occupations. The Women's Bureau reports a study in Connecticut in which young girls were found working for as little as one and two dollars a week. Another study, relating to Negro women, shows this group in four of the fifteen States studied earning a median weekly wage of less than six dollars.<sup>6</sup>

#### THE WOMEN'S BUREAU

The activities of the United States Women's Bureau, established by act of Congress in 1918, may be expected to influence the attitudes of the public favorably on behalf of the working women. Through investigations made by the Bureau, conditions will become known and compared. Good practices may be advocated, and ultimately an enlightened public opinion may support a program of adequate legislation, a program which will not keep women out of economic life but which will protect them against exploitation and injury.

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RELIEF AND PREVENTION OF  
ECONOMIC MALADJUSTMENT

IN THE typical primitive society, personal economic maladjustment of the kind so familiar to us rarely appears. Individual differences in strength, skill, or luck may result in differences in income, but in the nature of the case these differences cannot reach the extremes found among civilized peoples. A savage can easily manufacture hunting, fishing, or farming equipment for himself. Once having done so, he is on a par with all his fellows. The forest, the sea, and the soil are free for him to use to the limit of his capacity. Since he is his own master and since he produces goods for consumption rather than for sale, he need not fear the vicissitudes of unemployment. Nothing but his own ineptitude will prevent his gaining as good a living as other members of his group.

This does not mean that the primitive man is in all respects economically secure. If he escapes the disabling effects of accident and disease, he must inevitably meet the lowered efficiency of old age. The perishable nature of the food which man needs for his declining years prevents his accumulating it during his youth, no matter how thrifty he may be. Consequently, in groups where no provision is made by custom for the care of the aged, suffering is inevitable. The absence of a complicated economic system in primitive life makes possible an explanation of maladjustment in terms of individual factors alone. The difficulty of exploitation and an undeveloped technology guarantee a measure of freedom. The abundance of land prevents successful attempts at its monopolization. If a man fails under these conditions, the cause is likely to be found within him, rather than in the system under which he works.

## ATTITUDES TOWARD POVERTY

In this circumstance is doubtless rooted the attitude toward lack of economic success which is still common among us, although there are few similarities between our economic techniques and organization and the unspecialized food-getting of the savage. Limitations of every sort have arisen to thwart the individual in his economic endeavors. However firmly we may adhere to the doctrine of equality of opportunity, we cannot truthfully argue that it obtains in modern society. Yet we still believe that every man who is not physically or mentally handicapped, can make a decent living for himself and his family, if he wants to. His failure to do so has taken on the characteristics of a moral dereliction. We designate his economic condition by the term poverty and place him in a class apart. Occasionally arguments appear purporting to show that to be poor is no disgrace, but, although many are willing to agree that the individual is not always at fault, a stigma remains attached to the state of poverty not unlike that which hangs over illegitimate parentage.

That a man may be content with poverty does not excuse him, preachments of the alleged desirability of this state to the contrary notwithstanding. Of course, an individual with such a view is a rarity. We have well-developed social attitudes regarding the appropriateness of rates of expenditure or standards of living, and these attitudes we inculcate into all the members of our society. It is not enough to meet the simple requirements of life. Clothes are not acceptable merely on the basis of the comfort and protection they offer; they must also show a certain amount of style. A house does not fulfill its functions by providing shelter; it must also supply its occupants with respectability. And since no one attains the highest status he would like to have, it follows that everyone considers his income too small. In the comparison with those just above us in the social scale, a comparison often made, the average person is likely to think of himself as poor. Needless to say, this kind of poverty cannot be eliminated without a change in social

attitudes too extensive even to be thought of. Therefore, except in occasional maudlin sympathy for the rich man who has been suddenly reduced to middle-class circumstances, we do not feel any concern about persons who think themselves poor merely because they are unable to move into a higher social class.

With regard to those whose incomes are low or nonexistent, we have a different attitude. We do not, indeed, subscribe wholeheartedly to the doctrine that the world owes every man a living, but we do feel that no one should be permitted to starve to death. At the same time we believe that it is every man's duty to feed himself and that, unless he is obviously handicapped, he will be able to do so. This leads to a curious mixture of treatments in many cases of destitution, with results, as might be expected, that are highly unsatisfactory. Ordinarily a healthy man in the prime of life receives neither sympathy nor help if he falls into need. He is regarded as shiftless, lazy, perhaps even as vicious, and consequently undeserving. His dependents, on the other hand, not being responsible for his failure to provide, are entitled to support. The difficulty of providing food and shelter for the deserving members of the family, meanwhile denying it to the non-deserving, creates an insoluble problem. Any method short of breaking up the family results either in the unworthy being helped or the worthy being neglected.

Our reluctance to aid the undeserving is rationalized into a fear that the giving of aid will rob the recipient of his independence, thereby reducing him to pauperism. So familiar is this rationalization that it appears to have the validity of a scientific law. Upon examination, however, it turns out to be something wholly different. It is true, of course, that human beings easily learn to repeat successful activities. If a man finds begging a satisfactory way of making a living, he is likely to continue it in preference to a more uncertain venture. The same thing is true of all occupations. To allow a man to engage in shoemaking or in banking is to give him something of a right to continue in these vocations, to guarantee them to him



as sources of income. His desire for security will prompt him to keep the place he has won rather than leave his employment without a better one in sight. There is, then, nothing more remarkable in the development of beggars through social stimulation of their calling than there is in the appearance of shoemaking in response to the demand for shoes. Nor is there anything strange in the tendency to retain a position once gained.

We do not believe, however, that the shoemaker, simply because he is a shoemaker, would hesitate to accept promotion into a more highly paid occupation. We may take it as axiomatic that every man not crushed into hopelessness by repeated failure wants to better his condition. If many persons prefer subsisting on the scanty rations of charity to working for a living, the right conclusion is not that these persons are depraved but that the opportunity to earn a really decent living is denied them. How poor must be the lot of the laborer, if it be true that he can live better on crumbs of charity than on the fruits of his own earnings! That some people will become paupers regardless of the ease of earning a living is not to be doubted, any more than it is to be doubted that there are counterfeiters and forgers, but we cannot refuse to deal with money or checks merely on the suspicion that they may be false. Neither can we refuse aid to the needy merely because some of the applicants are imposters.

#### INDIVIDUATION AND ECONOMIC NECESSITY

A large portion of the life of every individual is spent in a state of dependency. A few persons become self-supporting in childhood and remain so; others are dependent all their lives. The average person is entirely dependent for the first twenty years of his life, intermittently so thereafter, until at last in old age he sinks back into a dependency from which he can never rise. Considering dependency in its relation to economic efficiency, we find nothing abnormal about this situation. It is to be expected that children and young persons, because of their lack of strength and training, will not be able to provide for themselves. Illness, change of occupation, accident, or the loss

of a job may result in temporary dependency of the most able worker; and finally, the weakness of old age may deprive its victim of the means of self-support. In times of general depression, when jobs are scarce, the standards of employability are raised and the number of unsuccessful competitors, soon to become dependents, will increase greatly.

The majority of these do not constitute social problems in the more ordinary sense of the word, because they do not become dependent upon the public. Parents support their dependent children; children support their parents. Husbands and wives support each other and often but not invariably dependents are supported by brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, grandparents, grandchildren, or even more remote relatives. In many cases, also, personal friends assist each other by gifts, loans, or services. It will be observed that practically all dependency is cared for by the family; most of the small remainder is cared for by friends. This conclusion is borne out by studies of the family relations of the inmates of almshouses. The vast majority of these have no near relatives, nor, obviously, any close friends. When needy persons seek relief, they frequently appear in family groups, within which the resources were shared until exhausted. The more important kinds of relief work deal chiefly with families as units.

These facts clearly indicate the importance of the family as a consumption unit, and, incidentally, as a means of keeping the individual from want. A close relationship between the extent of dependency and the size and solidarity of the family is definitely established. The orphan child and the childless old man furnish telling examples of the extreme cases, that is, of persons with no family at all. Less extreme, but of significance nonetheless, is the case of the child whose parents show so little concern that they abandon it or the aged parents whose children refuse to bear the burden of their support. The condition of these individuals illustrates the effect of decay in the feeling of communism in the family. As has been pointed out in another connection, this decay of communism in the family is a characteristic development in American society. The growth of indi-

vidualism has resulted in freeing the individual from obligations, but at the same time it has robbed him of certain privileges. If he is no longer his brother's keeper, neither may he look to his brother for help in time of need.

Obviously we find in the change of family solidarity referred to a major explanation of the increase in the number of public dependents in modern times. The continued decrease in the importance of the family has correspondingly increased the obligations of the larger community toward the dependent individual. The ways in which the community has undertaken to meet these obligations is described in the following paragraphs.

#### POOR RELIEF IN HISTORY

As suggested at the beginning of the chapter, primitive people had so little wealth and income that wide economic differences were impossible. Their social units were so small as to constitute primary groups, with relationships correspondingly personal and familiar. Poverty was therefore uncommon. When it did appear, relief was readily provided by friends. This method was entirely satisfactory in the circumstances. No institutional charity was necessary.

Upon the arrival of civilization and its attendant inequalities of class and income, poverty appeared. Little discrimination was at first made among the various asocial groups. Defective, diseased, vicious, and unfortunate persons were all treated alike. They lived as best they could, occupying cemeteries or other areas where they were not too frequently molested, and securing their food by begging. Private generosity to beggars supplied practically the only relief available to the poor. The uncertainty and scantiness of this form of aid did not encourage idleness on the part of the able-bodied. Practically all the beggars, therefore, were for one reason or another unemployable. The infirmities of the members of this group probably led to a high death rate and kept their numbers small, thus obviating extensive almsgiving.

## ROME

During the days of the greatness of the Roman Empire, the city of Rome is said to have had a population which may have reached a million. Even by present-day standards, life in Rome was distinctly urban. In the absence of exact data, it may be inferred that the city contained a considerable group of destitute persons. Private charity provided for them until free distribution of grain and other food supplies by the government was instituted. It appears that this distribution was undertaken by the rulers primarily as a means of courting favor with the masses, but doubtless it incidentally relieved the poverty of many of its beneficiaries. The cost of the distribution mounted with its continuance and with the great increase in the number of persons receiving aid. As a method of relieving poverty the plan was of little value; as a scheme to popularize the government it was little better. Its effect was to increase beyond all reasonable bounds the number of persons demanding aid. The populace came to regard free food as a legal right, due them from the state. But for the fact that Rome could levy tribute on the provinces, the system could never have been carried on because of the enormous cost. Attempts of the rulers to curtail expense by reducing the amount of grain distributed cost them as much in popularity as they had gained by instituting the system in the first place. This experience of Rome constitutes one of the best object lessons of the inadequacy of indiscriminate public charity.

## CHRISTIANITY

The Christian doctrine of the equality of all human beings before God carried with it certain implications for life on earth which greatly influenced the practice of relief-giving. In accordance with the Christian view of the inestimable value of every human soul, needy individuals became objects of concern and pity. True, such concern had to do with the welfare of the soul, but even this consideration required the saving of the

life at least long enough to save the soul. Christianity further encouraged the relief of want by its use of charity as a means of counteracting the consequences of wrongdoing. The statement, "Charity covereth a multitude of sins," literally interpreted, led ultimately to almsgiving on a huge scale. Within a few centuries after the foundation of Christianity, techniques had been provided which enabled wealthy persons to dispense charity vicariously, even to the extent of continuing it after their deaths. Under the auspices of the church, asylums and hospitals were established, sometimes for a particular class of needy persons, such as orphans and widows, and sometimes for all applicants. Or a sum of money might be willed to a church on condition that a portion of it be doled out at intervals to the poor. With the establishment of the monastic orders, many of which made almsgiving one of their chief activities, a method was provided for systematic and regular distribution of alms. Obviously, nothing in this practice more than remotely approached the public almsgiving of the present. Apparent need was the only condition required of applicants for aid. The pauperizing effects of indiscriminate distribution do not appear to have attracted much notice. In taking this attitude, the dispensers of charity were not inconsistent. Alms were given for the benefit of the giver; the recipient was important only because he made almsgiving possible. This function of the poor led to the curious argument that they played a useful and necessary rôle in the world, nay, an indispensable rôle, since by receiving alms they assisted in providing the means of salvation. Mendicant orders appeared, begging their way through the world, making a virtue of self-imposed destitution. Under the spell of such beliefs, society would not have eliminated poverty even if it could.<sup>1</sup>

It must not be supposed that the charitable activities administered by the church were without value. They provided relief in a period when private almsgiving was inadequate and public agencies were too uncertain or preoccupied to undertake it. In order to encourage almsgiving, the church called atten-

<sup>1</sup> See Sumner, W. G., *Folkways*, 1906, pp. 215-8.

tion to the sufferings of the poor, thereby building up the attitude of sympathy which is still one of the strongest motives appealed to by the agencies of charity. In assuming the care of the poor, the church accustomed society to bearing the responsibility of that care. In regularizing and systematizing the distribution of alms through a corps of official almsgivers, that is, priests and monks, the church institutionalized the whole procedure. Our present feeling, generally accepted, that the community should care for its helpless members through institutions set up for the purpose unquestionably owes its impetus to the Christian church.<sup>2</sup>

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH POOR LAW

In England, as elsewhere in Europe, systematic almsgiving came with Christianity and developed with the church. Changing economic conditions following the Black Death necessitated state interference with beggars and vagabonds to save the country from being overrun by idle and vicious rogues, yet up to the time of the Protestant revolt the church had practically complete control of poor relief. The destruction of the monasteries and general disruption of the church organizations which followed the break with the Roman Church greatly decreased the efficiency of the church as an agency for poor relief. Apparently the Protestant church provided insufficient incentives for almsgiving, for one of the earliest efforts of the state, in the reign of Henry VIII, to relieve poverty consisted in directing the clergy on every possible occasion to "exhort, move, stir, and provoke people to be liberal"<sup>3</sup> in their donations. From time to time thereafter, provisions were made for still more diligent exhortation, but without the anticipated results. Shortly after Elizabeth's accession, the clergy was authorized to turn obstinate persons over to the civil justices, who were charged with persuading these persons to give to the poor according to their abilities. If such attempted persuasion failed, the justices could

<sup>2</sup> See Hobhouse, L. T., *Morals in Evolution*, 1906; and Lecky, W. E. H., *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*, Third Edition, 1919.

<sup>3</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, Vol. XIX, p. 463.

send the culprits to jail until they became more generous. In this legislation is noted an intermediate step in the change from voluntary contribution to taxation as a means of raising money for the support of the poor. It indicates also the growth of community responsibility for the care of destitute persons. Several enactments, culminating in the famous poor law of 1601 (43 Elizabeth, C. 2), finally made the care of the poor a temporal rather than spiritual concern. The act provided for the appointment of overseers of the poor in each parish, upon whom devolved the duty of building workhouses for the housing of the destitute and of supplying work for such of their charges as were able-bodied. As with other public undertakings, the cost of operating the system was to be met through taxation.

Except for a few additions, the poor law of 1601 remained the legal basis for English relief for more than two hundred years. This law was in force throughout the entire American colonial period, during which English institutions were being transplanted to America. It may be regarded, therefore, as the progenitor of the systems of poor relief now found in the United States.

#### INDOOR VS. OUTDOOR RELIEF

It must not be supposed, on account of the long life of the poor law of 1601, that it solved satisfactorily all questions of the care of the poor. Numerous difficulties arose which were struggled with unsuccessfully and which are still perplexing problems in connection with poor relief. The tendency for the cost of poor relief to become larger and larger led to the proposal that no relief should be given to needy persons in their own homes. Instead, they should be required to live in workhouses provided for them. It was argued that the ease of obtaining relief when it was distributed to persons in their homes and the comparative freedom from social stigma enjoyed by the recipients resulted in a large and increasing number of paupers. Outdoor relief was thus seen to have a damag-

ing effect upon the character of the people. The reluctance of the poor to leave home and the shame they felt upon being domiciled in the almshouse greatly reduced the number of applicants under this system. Naturally the immediate cost of poor relief was also reduced.

Against the apparent economy of indoor relief has been argued the inhumanity of the system. As practiced, it meant the breaking up of families, the herding together of the vicious and the virtuous, and destruction of the self-respect of all. The development of modern methods of case work, it has been maintained, takes from outdoor relief its pauperizing tendencies and effects a rehabilitation of family or individual, thereby relieving society of a burden which, once assumed under the plan of indoor relief, would have to be borne throughout the recipient's life. In recent times the trend of poor relief has tended toward the outdoor plan, but the indoor plan still has many adherents.

#### THE WORK TEST

Early in the history of English poor relief, the principle was accepted that the economic condition of the recipient of relief should not be more eligible than that of the poorest self-supporting citizen, especially since the latter would be obliged to contribute through taxes to the support of the former. So far as concerned income, this could be achieved by giving the pauper less and poorer food, shelter, and clothing than could be purchased by the lowest-paid wage earner. Inevitably this means an income just barely sufficient to support life, since the great mass of workmen receive but little more from their wages, and since most of those who must ask for help do not do so until their income falls below the least they can possibly live on. This means, furthermore, that the most that can be expected from poor relief is the prevention of death from exposure or from acute starvation.

In addition to reducing the income of the pauper to the lowest possible amount, it was considered necessary to make the condi-



tions of the distribution no less onerous than the long day of toil endured by the workman. For this purpose, the administrators of poor relief devised the work test. In the case of persons unable to work as a result of recognized disabilities such as infancy, old age, illness, insanity, or loss of limbs, no work was ordinarily demanded or expected. The able-bodied were required to show that they were seeking charity as a last resort by being forced to work. Providing work for applicants for relief has proved difficult for the administrators of the poor laws from the beginning to the present day. The work must be available at any time and it must be of such character that any man who is able to work at all can do it. To meet these requirements the task must be so simple as to demand no skill or special aptitude, and so far unnecessary that it may be postponed when there are no workers. The result is that no worthwhile work can be found. In many cases, the cost of providing work for paupers has been greater than the value of the services rendered. Under these conditions, the labor provision is likely to be limited to some device for determining the applicant's willingness to work. If he can prove his willingness to work, he has demonstrated his right to receive aid. Since it is expensive actually to make him work, he is not ordinarily required to do so, once he has shown this willingness. The dispensers of relief can hardly be blamed for refusing to increase their expenses by providing "made" work, or tasks which have no intrinsic value.

The problems here involved are not likely to be solved soon. With a considerable number of workers unemployed as the normal state of affairs, it is practically impossible for the almshouse manager to find paying employment for a group of people who cannot find it for themselves. In spite of the desirability of providing it, he prefers to leave it out of his program in the interests of economy, thereby making it difficult to determine whether or not the able-bodied applicants are really willing to work.

## THE LAW OF SETTLEMENT

The English poor law of 1601 designated the parish as the unit for its administration. This was but the legalizing of the custom of each neighborhood taking care of its own poor, an admirable custom, tending to secure honest and efficient administration of the funds. The parish did not, of course, feel any responsibility for nonresident paupers. In view of the expense of keeping them, each parish tried to shift the burden to its neighbors. The result was meticulous insistence that every applicant for aid be a resident of the parish where he was to receive it. Inasmuch as unemployed persons tended to wander about a good deal, they were quite likely to be stricken by necessity far from their native parishes. In order to meet this difficulty, laws were passed designating what constitutes legal settlement, so that it is possible to determine where a person belongs and thus hold the proper parish responsible for his care.

In America, a similar problem has arisen. Poor relief in this country has been carried on largely by small units—townships, counties, or cities. Like the parishes of England, these units have felt that they owed assistance only to members of their own communities. To attempt to hold to this ideal in a country where the poor people are highly mobile has proved most difficult. Special policies have been developed in dealing with transients. In many places they are encouraged to leave the community as quickly as possible. Sometimes they are helped to do so by the gift of a few gallons of gasoline or forced to leave by threat of arrest. Vagrancy is thus encouraged rather than checked. Social workers recognize and deplore the evils of the practice, but circumstances compel all communities to conform more or less. Any community which failed to eject destitute transients found within its borders would soon be crowded with paupers from all parts of the country.

Most of the States have attempted to meet the problem by means of legislation. The laws of the several States are, however, extremely variable in their requirements as to the time of

prior residence necessary to the acquisition of settlement. In Wyoming settlement is acquired in ninety days, whereas in several New England States five years' residence is demanded. Being more desirous of getting rid of responsibility than of assuming it, several States deprive their citizens of settlement after a period of absence much shorter than the period required to gain it. It is possible for persons moving from one State (for example, South Dakota) to another (Maine may be cited) to be without settlement for nearly five years. In addition to a specified time of residence within the State, the laws impose further requirements for residence within the county or other local division, and in some cases stipulate that the individual must have been self-supporting during the period. Through the depression of the early nineteen-thirties, the infinite confusion and expense which would have resulted from the attempts of the counties, cities, and States to send all non-residents where they belonged was largely prevented by the transient relief program of the Federal government. This program reached all parts of the nation and cared for more than a quarter million homeless persons.

#### SHIFTING OF COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

If the local unit which is responsible for the poor within its limits has but little taxable property and considerable numbers of poor people, the burden of poor relief may fall heavily upon the few persons who do not themselves need it. On the other hand, if the community is made up predominantly of wealthy people, the cost of poor relief may be extremely low. The inequalities thus resulting have led to attempts on part of the more heavily burdened communities to shift the cost to the larger administrative units to which they belong. Thus the ward wants the poor taken care of by the city; the city tries to pass the duty on to the State; the State attempts to shift the responsibility to the nation. In view of the large-scale nature of economic undertakings and of the concentration of wealth and income in the hands of a few people who are not equally distributed among local communities, national poor relief would

doubtless yield the most equitable plan for providing aid to the economically maladjusted. Against this plan may be urged the necessity for conducting poor relief on a personal basis, as a neighborhood affair, obviously impossible if conducted on a large scale. But it must be remembered that the neighborhood has almost disappeared from the large city, so that even now poor relief by the city is conducted by strangers working among strangers distributing relief funds contributed by strangers. So far the States have successfully evaded ultimate responsibility for the poor, but have accepted responsibility for the care of numerous defective classes, many of whom are poor as well as defective. These classes have been provided for by the establishment of institutions serving the whole population of the State. Within the past few years, the scene of conflict over the question of responsibility for the poor has shifted from intra-State to extra-State areas. The problem is now: can the Federal government be made responsible for all forms of relief?

#### FAMILY CASE WORK

A general recognition of the pauperizing effect of poor relief and a fear of the burden of its mounting costs have led to an attempt to discriminate among the various kinds of poor and to rehabilitate the persons assisted so that they may become self-supporting. The outcome of this attempt has been the development of family case work. It is the case worker's objective to make a detailed investigation of all factors which may have a bearing on the economic position of the person to be relieved. The giving of material aid is regarded as a temporary measure, to be utilized only until the cause of the necessity for relief can be discovered and removed. Emphasis is laid upon restoration of the individual's ability to support himself rather than upon maintaining him at public expense. To this end, an examination is made of the individual's occupation, employment, health, and mentality, as well as his family and community relationships. If it is found that the applicant is unemployed because he lacks proper occupational training, the remedy is obviously to provide the necessary training. If

he is poor because his wife is a careless housekeeper, a course in budgeting and buying will put the family on its feet. The immediate cost of this kind of treatment is much higher than that of direct relief. Shortsighted public officials and taxpayers often note this, while failing to realize that the ultimate cost of direct relief may be much greater.

Case work has developed an extensive technique with numerous specialties. Social workers are being required to secure training in this technique before they are accepted for employment by modern social agencies. The necessity for good case work has been sufficiently recognized as of social importance to gain it a secure place in the administration of relief. Social work, in consequence, is rapidly approaching the status of a profession.

Legitimate criticism of family case work cannot be made on grounds of high cost or inefficiency. Compared with the indiscriminate relief which it has superseded, it is extremely economical, for the reason that it successfully rehabilitates many victims of the economic struggle. However, as a policy to be permanently adopted by society in the conflict with destitution, it may be criticized because of its inadequacy. It can take into account only the individual factors in the situation. For the difficulties of the man who is able and willing to work but can find no job, it offers no solution. Therefore, when industrial depression greatly increases unemployment, the case-work method is powerless and old forms of relief must be resorted to again. As a corollary to this criticism, it may be observed that case work is remedial, not preventive. It rescues those who have fallen into poverty, but does nothing to keep others from falling into the same pit. Perhaps it is beyond the province of case work, as now conceived, to do preventive work. If so, it should be utilized in conjunction with preventive methods, never to their exclusion.

#### OLD-AGE DEPENDENCY

The rapidly decreasing birth rates and death rates of the last fifty years have had, as might be expected, a profound effect

upon the age composition of the population. As the proportion of children and young people decrease and as better medical service enables more people to survive the diseases of middle age, a larger part of the population will be included in the upper age groups. An indication of the change is found in the census reports for 1880 and 1930, respectively. In the former year, 3.4 per cent of the population of the United States was sixty-five years of age or over; in the latter, the proportion was 5.4 per cent. As time goes on, the proportion of old persons may be expected to increase, reaching percentages of 6.3, 7.7, and 9.0 in 1940, 1950, and 1960, respectively.<sup>4</sup> This group furnishes a large share of the cases requiring material relief. Since little can be done for aged, destitute persons to enable them to earn their own living, they tend to become permanent charges of the community. The vast majority of these persons have been respectable and industrious citizens all their lives. To class them with ordinary paupers and keep them miserably alive with a scanty dole, given only on condition that they live in an almshouse, is not only inhuman but, according to present-day standards, unjust. Most European countries have come to a realization of the obligation of society toward its aged members and have accepted the responsibility; in the United States, where the problem of the aged poor has perhaps been somewhat less insistent, the social conscience has awakened more recently. Our attempts to relieve the economic vicissitudes of old age are still scarcely beyond the experimental stage.

#### THE PENSION SYSTEM

Throughout the period of our national history, military pensions have been utilized by the United States as a means of rewarding soldiers and some of their dependents. From 1790 to 1937, a total sum of more than \$21,000,000,000 has been spent for the relief of veterans. If pensions for World War veterans are paid on the same scale as have been those to veterans of the Civil War, the expenditure will probably exceed \$50,000,000,000. From these figures it may be readily seen that the

<sup>4</sup> Social Security Board, *Social Security in America*, 1937, p. 141.

pension system is a well-established, large-scale practice in the United States. It has naturally occurred to persons interested in preventing the destitution so prevalent in old age that this system might easily be extended to include all needy persons above the age of sixty-five or seventy years. Proposals for such a plan did not at first meet with much favorable response in America. Germany led the way among the nations of the world by instituting pensions for the aged poor in 1889 as part of a general scheme of state insurance for workers.<sup>5</sup> Other European nations have followed Germany's example; practically all Europe now provides pensions for its destitute, aged population. In the United States the earliest attempt to introduce an old age pension system occurred in Arizona in 1914. Though passed by a popular majority of two to one, the law was declared unconstitutional by the Arizona Supreme Court in 1915. "The year 1923 marks the beginning of old age pension legislation in the United States, although the net results of the activity of that year were relatively slight. A proposed amendment to the constitution of Ohio, which would have authorized old age pensions in that state, was rejected by a referendum vote of two to one. Three states, Montana, Nevada, and Pennsylvania, enacted old age pension laws."<sup>6</sup> By the end of 1931, seventeen States and Alaska were making special provision for the aged. In nine of these States, the minimum age of the pensioners was seventy years; in the remaining eight, it was sixty-five. In Alaska, men were pensioned at sixty-five; women at sixty. A long previous residence, ordinarily ten years, was required for eligibility to pensions. Most of the States prescribed a maximum amount for pensions, such as thirty dollars a month or a dollar a day. Several methods were in use for providing the necessary funds. In some States, the entire cost was borne by the counties; in others, jointly by the counties and the State; in still others, by the State alone. At the end of 1931, about 70,000 persons were receiving old-age pensions in the United States. A con-

<sup>5</sup> National Industrial Conference Board, Inc., *The Support of the Aged*, 1931, p. 44.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

siderable number of private employers, for example, railroads and large industrial concerns, had pension systems for their employees. Some of these appeared to function satisfactorily. These facts show a decisive trend toward old-age pensions, upon the basis of which it seemed that within a few years every State would pension its aged citizens.<sup>7</sup>

#### DEPRESSION AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The further development of this movement was interrupted by the depression of the nineteen-thirties. Unprecedented in extent and severity, this disruption of the economic machine added many millions of persons to the several millions normally unemployed and led to widespread privation. During the first two or three years, the local communities and the States did what they could to relieve the distress of their citizens, but by the last months of 1932 it became evident that Federal aid would be necessary. Some emergency advances were made to the States by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Adequate assistance was not possible, however, until the establishment of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in the spring of 1933.

From that time to the present (1940), the Federal government has continued to aid the States in giving relief as well as to carry on relief projects on its own account. In general, the Federal government has maintained that its assistance is to be regarded strictly as of an emergency character, designed to aid the employable unemployed, and that the responsibility for the unemployable poor must rest with the State. Actually, it has not been possible to maintain the implied distinction between those eligible to relief from Federal sources and those not eligible. The relief offered has been of two main kinds, work relief and direct relief. The former consists of employment on certain Government-approved projects, practically all in the nature of public works. The second consists of food or cash given to those who cannot work or for whom work cannot be found. This great relief program had not long been under

<sup>7</sup> See Queen, Stuart A., *Social Work in the Light of History*, 1922.



way before it was discovered that relief would have to continue indefinitely unless some way could be found to reduce the number of persons on the relief rolls. Out of the realization of this necessity came the legislation and the program we have come to know as Social Security.

Intensive study of the problems involved in the establishment of an adequate social security program was undertaken by the President's Committee on Economic Security appointed in June, 1934. The report of this committee, with recommendations for appropriate legislation, was presented to Congress in a special message by the President in January, 1935. In August, 1935, the social security bill became a law. This law provides for seven types of aid, under the following headings: Grants to States for old-age assistance; Federal old-age benefits; Grants to States for unemployment compensation administration; Grants to States for aid to dependent children; Grants to States for maternal and child welfare; Public health work; and Grants to States for aid to the blind.<sup>8</sup> A Social Security Board of three members appointed by the President administers the law. Special taxes are imposed to raise the funds required to pay old-age benefits and unemployment compensation.

#### OLD-AGE ASSISTANCE AND OLD-AGE BENEFITS

Against the Federal public pensions system it has been argued that such a plan is contrary to the individualistic American ideal, and that any system administered by the Government will be inefficient and corrupt, with resultant excessive cost. Relief through pensions felt to be deserved will carry no stigma, and will consequently pauperize the recipient. Pensions will discourage thrift, initiative, and acceptance of responsibility for the aged by their children and employers. The granting of old-age pensions will break down the resistance of legislators to other acts of a similar sort. Soon there will be agitation for larger pensions, for lower age limits, and for the inclusion of widows, homeless children, cripples, and others. Even with all this, other forms of relief will have to be continued at prac-

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of aid to the blind, see Chapter 21.

tically the same cost as before. Most seriously of all, a pension system will result in a lowering of wages by the deduction of the expected benefits of the pension by the employer.<sup>9</sup>

Arguments at least equally strong are offered by the advocates of the pension system. With respect to the workers taking care of themselves by insurance or by a regular deduction from wages retained by the State or other agency, this is held to be impossible owing to the low wages the workers receive. If participation is voluntary, such systems do not function. Workers cannot afford to pay fees and dues, no matter how greatly they may appreciate the ultimate benefits. If a pension system is to succeed in doing what may be expected of it, the government must meet all or practically all of the expense. Moreover, the only agency capable of administering a pension system satisfactorily is the national government. Small units do not have a sufficiently large and uniform population to make for an even distribution of the cost. The States, in order to protect themselves against an influx of indigent citizens from other States, could never be as generous in their allowances as they might like to be, nor could they admit to their pension lists persons who have not resided in the State for a number of years. Private pension systems are too unreliable. Many business concerns are too small even to undertake such a plan. Any of them may become bankrupt, go out of business, or stop paying pensions merely because they do not wish to continue. This form of pension is objected to by organized labor on the ground that it makes the worker too subservient to his master. Especially as the time of his retirement approaches, the worker will be afraid to do anything which might lead to his dismissal and thus withhold from him the coveted pension. It has also been alleged that pensioners have been used by former employers as strikebreakers.

Regardless of arguments for or against pension systems, it seems undeniable that as long as we retain our present economic arrangements we shall have to support large numbers of aged

<sup>9</sup> See National Industrial Conference Board, Inc., *The Support of the Aged*, 1931, pp. 61-3.

persons at public expense in some fashion or other. The increasing size of the aged groups in our population and the earlier retirement of workers by industry are factors intensifying the problem. So also are the waning of the feelings of filial responsibility and the decreasing number of children per family. An investigation conducted in Massachusetts brought forth the information that of 17,357 men and women over sixty-five, 23.2 per cent had annual incomes of less than a hundred dollars and 32.4 per cent had incomes of less than \$400.<sup>10</sup> A survey in Connecticut showed that of the persons over sixty-five in that State 49.2 per cent had annual incomes of less than \$300 and 33.5 per cent had no incomes at all.<sup>11</sup> In New York it was found that, in 1929, 56.4 per cent of those over sixty-five and 64 per cent of those over seventy were dependent, most of them on relatives and friends.<sup>12</sup>

To provide for these persons only through the regular channels of poor relief, with the inevitable stigma of pauperism, is to add unnecessary and undeserved suffering to lives not too happy at best. The wages of large groups of industrial workers are too low to permit the long years of systematic saving required for an income in old age. Illness, accident, or bank failures may consume a man's savings and leave him in destitution despite his best efforts to accumulate a competency. Worry over the uncertainties of the future adds a heavy burden to the load of responsibility carried by every man whose right to live must be won day by day with his hands. If he could be sure that at the worst he would have food and shelter without being classed with the quasi-criminals, his efficiency would increase, perhaps even to the point of actually making it easier for him to save for the future. Such a certainty is provided

<sup>10</sup> Massachusetts Commission on Pensions, *Report*, November, 1925, p. 48, quoted by National Industrial Conference Board, Inc., *The Support of the Aged*, 1931, p. 39.

<sup>11</sup> Connecticut Commission to Investigate the Subject of Old Age Pensions, *Report on Old Age Relief*, 1932, pp. 70-1, quoted by Committee on Economic Security, *Social Security in America*, 1937, p. 149.

<sup>12</sup> New York State Commission on Old Age Security, *Old Age Security*, 1930, p. 39, quoted by Committee on Economic Security, *Social Security in America*, 1937, p. 152.

by the old-age pension, to which the needy aged individual should be entitled by virtue of a lifetime of service.

The Social Security Act makes provision for two kinds or classes of pensions. The first of these, styled "old-age assistance," is a noncontributory old-age pension, administered by each of the several States. The Federal government aids the States by contributing to the State pension fund half the amount paid out, with a maximum contribution of \$20 per month per pensioner. The Social Security Board controls the system and its administration through its power to withhold Federal aid from those States not having laws which comply with the requirements of the Act. These requirements include: State supervision and financial participation; an age requirement of not more than seventy to January 1, 1940, and of not more than sixty-five thereafter; inclusion of all citizens of the United States otherwise eligible; and fair hearings for all persons whose applications for pensions have been refused. The States are left free to determine the granting of pensions on the basis of need as revealed by competent investigation. All the States are now (1940) giving old-age assistance under the Social Security Act to a total of more than one and nine-tenths million persons.

The second class of pensions, styled "old-age and survivor's insurance," is a contributory system designed ultimately to make old-age assistance unnecessary and, also through the collection of taxes from the prospective recipient and his employer, to reduce the excessive burden on the general revenue of the governments resulting from the indefinite continuance of large-scale noncontributory pensions. Old-age benefits are available only to employed persons in certain "covered" occupations. Agricultural laborers, domestic servants, casual workers, marine workers, and the employees of governments or their agencies, or of nonprofit organizations and agencies, are excluded. Each participant will receive, on reaching the age of sixty-five, a monthly payment, regardless of his need, the amount of which will be determined by the total wages (not to exceed \$3,000 per year) earned and taxed under the law during

his working career. Exceptions are provided for those receiving very small amounts. A tax on the wages of each employee is collected by the employer and forwarded, with a pay-roll tax paid by the employer, to the Treasury Department to meet the costs of the pensions. The amount of the tax, that is, as paid by both the employee and by the employer, is one per cent of the total wages for the years 1940, 1941, and 1942. Ultimately, an amount equal to six per cent of the wages of workers in the covered employments will be paid into the fund from which benefits will be paid out. Already nearly forty-eight million persons are included in the system, and the payment of benefits has begun.

Critics of the plan point to the extremely large reserve fund which will be accumulated as a result of the excess of income over outgo during the first two or three decades of operation. Taking many billions of dollars of producers' earnings and preventing their being spent for economic goods will, it is argued, result in depression, thereby increasing the ill it is designed to cure. The omission of agricultural labor and domestic service from the list of covered employments is also criticized on the ground that these groups are among those whose elder members are most likely to need assistance.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Not all persons in need are old or unemployable. Many in the prime of life and at the height of their productive capacities must seek relief because they have been unable to find work. One of the most characteristic features of modern large-scale industrial development is large-scale industrial unemployment. Whole communities, especially those dependent upon a single industry, are sometimes plunged into poverty by the closing of the mills. The unemployment census taken by the United States government in 1935 indicated that about 10,900,000 were then out of work.

To meet the emergency needs of unemployment, the Social Security Act provides for compensation to be paid under certain conditions to persons out of work. This is done under

a system of insurance, wherein the employer pays the premiums and the employee receives the benefits. The employer's contribution is in the form of a pay-roll tax levied upon employers of eight or more employees in the covered occupations. The amount of the tax was one per cent of the pay roll in 1936; two per cent in 1937; and has now reached its maximum of three per cent. Certain reductions are made to employers whose workers show exceptionally low unemployment records. The covered employments exclude the same groups excluded from participation in old-age benefits.

The unemployment compensation system is administered by the States in co-ordination with an employment or placement service in which all persons receiving unemployment compensation or holding work relief jobs must register. Already the employment service has placed many millions of workers and it promises, as it becomes better known among employers, to furnish a highly efficient mechanism for bringing the worker and the job together. However, when there are no jobs available, the employment service can, of course, do nothing for its clients. In this event, the compensation received by the worker is expected to provide him with a portion of his regular income until he can find another job.

#### FEDERAL AID FOR CHILDREN

The extent to which children suffer from the effects of economic maladjustment is shown by the fact that about eight million persons under the age of sixteen were among those receiving relief toward the end of 1934, this group constituting forty per cent of the total. Obviously children, being naturally dependent, are more likely to fall into need than are adults, and no system of social security worthy of the name can overlook this fact. Provision has been made, therefore, through which the Federal government will give financial aid to the several States to assist them in carrying out four separate programs designed to aid children. The first of these, aid to dependent children, is in the form of a pension or subsidy granted to a relative for the benefit of the child who lives in the home of

such relative and who is in need by reason of being deprived of parental support. The amount of the subsidy, of which the Federal government contributes one-third, is limited to \$18 per month for one child and to \$12 per month for each additional child in the same home. The other three types of service—maternal and child health services, services for crippled children, and child welfare services—are encouraged by Federal grants to States which establish such services according to the methods and standards approved by the United States Children's Bureau. By December, 1938, the District of Columbia and all the States but two had submitted satisfactory plans for children's aid. In February, 1940, 329,000 families were receiving Federal assistance in caring for 793,000 children.

#### CAN POVERTY BE PREVENTED?

Although society has long recognized poverty as a major social ill and although millions of dollars have been spent in attacking it, very little has been done deliberately to prevent it. Our resources are so completely absorbed in helping those who are already poor that we are obliged to neglect those who will inevitably become poor unless they are helped in advance. Offhand, this appears to be a foolish policy, since it is nearly always cheaper to avoid calamity than to repair the damage afterward. Actually, the remedial method of dealing with poverty is the only method consistent with our attitudes toward economic responsibility and with our economic system. Under that system every person who is a potential competitor in the struggle for existence must look out for himself. The income of the group as a whole is not distributed according to the needs of the individual but according to his ability to command an income-yielding position, such as a job or ownership of capital. To distribute income on the basis of need would break the morale of our system and rob it of its chief incentive. We are, therefore, able to provide for the poor only by placing them under special disabilities (depriving them of the vote, for example), and keeping their scale of living on the lowest possible level.

The continued specialization in economic activities, with its ever-increasing interdependence and with the irresistible advantages accumulating in the hands of successful individuals, has made it difficult for the average man to provide for himself and his family. It would be even more difficult were it not for certain social changes which have worked in his favor. These developments are of interest, because they have served incidentally to prevent poverty and because they indicate the kind of change necessary to bring about its elimination. As examples may be mentioned the public health movement; public education, including vocational training; and progressive income and inheritance taxation. These practices involve the process of taking income away from the economically successful and giving it to the unsuccessful in the form of services which will increase the economic abilities and opportunities of the latter. Obviously, the more of this kind of redistribution of wealth we have the nearer we shall come to equality of opportunity. Without such redistribution, we are certain to have poverty. Apparently, poverty cannot be eliminated without the elimination of riches—a change which might or might not prove advantageous to society as a whole.

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## POLITICAL MALADJUSTMENT

AT its best, government provides the mechanism through which the group serves its members as an approved form of social control; at its worst, government is the tool of selfish individuals. Existing governments are neither best nor worst, but somewhere between. They more or less meet the demands of the majority but are occasionally utilized for private ends. Probably no government has ever functioned to the complete satisfaction of all the citizens under its authority. Many have failed so conclusively that they have been overthrown and discarded through revolution. To guard against the misfortunes of revolution, modern governments generally have provided for methods of peaceful change, whereby the political system can be gradually altered to meet new circumstances without the dangers and sufferings attendant upon a break in its continuity. These provisions for change seldom work well. A government quickly becomes so resistant to novelty that it does not keep up with the demands made upon it by the citizens. The failure of political institutions to function in accordance with the fluctuating desires and expectations of the group may be designated as political maladjustment.

## CAUSAL FACTORS IN POLITICAL MALADJUSTMENT

The tendency for institutions to solidify, once they have become established, is a most conspicuous feature of governments. Entrusted with the power of enforcing law, they are unable to resist the temptation to utilize their powers in their own interests, that is, in the interests of officials and functionaries. Treason is therefore regarded by governments as the most serious of offenses, and traitors are most harshly punished. Theoretically, the citizens can always revolt and discard an

objectionable government, but in practice this may be a difficult undertaking. The government ordinarily has control over the police and the army, both of which may be utilized to suppress revolution. Through its superior organization and control over law-enforcing agencies, the government may prevent the organization of citizens, without which a successful revolt is impossible. Thus a government, whether popular or not, may continue in power over a long period.

In the small isolated groups of primitive society, this condition was satisfactory enough. Social change proceeded too slowly to be observed, and the population was so homogeneous in every respect that few divergent interests developed. Laws and mores were identical, and the people unanimous in their support. This situation presents a great contrast with modern conditions. States have grown in size until they include people of widely varying cultural characteristics; great differences in social status have arisen; social change proceeds at a rapid pace. Even with the best of intentions, no set of present-day government officials could meet all the expectations of the citizens. Their needs are too numerous, too changeable, and too contradictory to be cared for by any human agency. A considerable amount of dissatisfaction with the government is therefore to be accepted and to be regarded as normal. When, however, the government persistently refuses to hear the proper petitions of large groups of citizens, it does not function properly and is to be regarded as maladjusted. Apparently without realizing that their own neglect is often responsible for the filling of official positions by men incapable or unwilling to serve the interests of the people, the voters have demanded certain reforms which they believe will remedy the situation.

These reforms include the initiative, the referendum, the recall of judicial decisions, and the recall of officials. Except the last, all provide that the people, upon presentation of a petition signed by the proper number of voters, may decide in a popular election an issue ordinarily left to the decision of officials duly elected or appointed. The last provides for the removal of elective officers who have displeased a sufficient

number of voters to cause them to petition for an election. All this indicates a distrust of representative government. Unhappily, these reforms confer no increased wisdom upon the electorate. If the people have made a bad choice in the selection of officials once, they are quite as likely to do it again. If propaganda of interested groups has secured special favors from the legislature, similar propaganda will usually secure the same favors from the voters themselves.

#### FREE SPEECH

The question of free speech always resolves itself into a struggle between the government and its critics. The former desires to forbid all expression of opinion which may result in actions threatening its position. The latter insist upon the right to say anything they choose. As might be expected in such circumstances, a government which feels secure grants comparatively great freedom of speech. A government in danger of being overthrown establishes censorship, defines criticism of the existing regime as treason, and severely punishes offenders. The extent to which a government really meets the desires of the people can be judged with fair accuracy, therefore, from the restrictions imposed upon the public expression of opinion.

#### NONPARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT

It is manifestly difficult, if not quite impossible, for the two parties which periodically struggle for control of the government in America to represent adequately the interests of the voters. Issues do not automatically group themselves into two opposing divisions, corresponding to party platforms. The citizen who wholeheartedly favors every provision of a party platform is rare. Often the voter is forced to vote against some of his desires in order to support certain others. Sometimes there is no choice. In such cases, the citizen may not trouble to vote at all. This happens so frequently as to result in one of the serious problems of government in America. From one fifth to one half of the citizens find the government so un-

responsive to their votes or the issues as presented by the two major parties so unimportant or confused that they consider voting a waste of time and effort. So far as this group of citizens is concerned, democratic government as conducted in America is a failure. Because of lack of proper machinery or lack of interest, they cannot express their wishes at the polls. The election of officials takes place to a large extent by default, and an administration is set up which accurately represents only a small minority.

#### THE PROBLEM OF CLASS DIFFERENCES

Class differences among the citizens creates difficulties for the government, especially when these differences are not recognized for what they are. In the United States, where all men are presumably equal before the law, this very fact of equal treatment has resulted in gross inequalities. Thus courts set up for the purpose of righting economic wrongs often fail because of the inability of those wronged to utilize their services. The following case is illustrative:

A woman borrowed ten dollars in 1914, and for two years paid interest at 180 per cent. In 1916 a law was enacted fixing 36 per cent as the maximum rate. The lender, by a device contrary to the statute, compelled her to continue paying 156 per cent interest. The law also provided that if excess interest were charged, the loan would be declared void by a suit in equity. The law was on the books. The court house was open, the equity court in session with its judge on the bench and its officers in attendance. All that was of no avail to her, for the law could not bring its redress until five dollars was paid for service of process and entry fee, and ten dollars to an attorney to draw, file, and present the necessary bill of complaint. Fifteen dollars she did not have and, because of her condition could not earn. For her there was no law.<sup>1</sup>

Court costs are not inordinately high. On the whole, courts collect no more in fees than the legitimate expenses of operation. Unfortunately, it may cost just as much to try a case involving ten dollars as one involving ten thousand, and when

<sup>1</sup> Smith, Reginald Heber, *Justice and the Poor*, p. 11. New York: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1919.

the court expenses are assessed without regard to the amount involved in the controversy, the apparent equality becomes an inequality, bearing heavily on the poor. Their claims go unheard, because the cost of redress may exceed the amount at issue.

The necessity for counsel adds other items to the cost of litigation. Theoretically, every man may try his own case; practically, he must have a lawyer. The outcome of the suit depends in no small degree upon the skill of the attorney. And since skilled attorneys cost more than unskilled ones, it follows that the poor man almost invariably goes to court under the handicap of relatively weak representation.

In order to prevent injustice through undue haste, the law has provided for numerous safeguards through delays and postponements. If the matter at issue is payment of wages which the plaintiff must have to live, delay may be fatal. He may be forced by necessity to accept a small part of what is due him, rather than suffer want and privation while awaiting the uncertain outcome of the lawsuit. More than likely, in view of the difficulties to be encountered, the poor man will stay out of court altogether. As for his utilization of the higher courts, when he is displeased with decisions of the lower, this is almost entirely out of the question. A small fortune must be spent to bring a case before the Supreme Court of the United States. No matter how important the issue may be to the individual, he must content himself with such services of the courts as he can pay for.

#### THE CRIMINAL COURTS

Discrimination against the poor is not limited to the civil courts. Under the theoretical rule of treating all defendants alike, the criminal courts come to treat them unlike. An example is found in the use of fines as punishment. Since fines are assessed in proportion to the seriousness of the offense and the degree of guilt, and in accordance with a schedule fixed by law, no account may be taken legally of the offender's ability to pay. The result is that penalties ostensibly equal are

actually not even approximately so. Thus, for the man whose income is twenty dollars a week to pay a twenty-dollar fine obviously causes him and his family more hardship than if his income were twenty dollars a day. The case of the offender with no income is worse. He will be obliged to serve a jail sentence in lieu of the fine, thereby suffering a penalty more severe than that contemplated by the law. It is said that more than half the jail sentences in the United States are served for nonpayment of fines. A jail sentence served for nonpayment of a fine is clearly punishment of the poor man for being poor, a form of imprisonment for debt.

#### INEQUALITIES OF TAXATION

Taxation means collection of money from individuals to be expended for the public good. Often it involves taking money from one group of citizens and giving it to another for their services, which are presumed to benefit the whole people. Disagreement as to the usefulness of the expenditures, as well as a general desire to evade responsibilities, makes it difficult to assess taxes equitably. Every tax which is easily recognized as a tax meets with vigorous protest from those who are obliged to pay it. Governments have therefore inclined toward the policy of levying taxes in the forms which arouse the fewest complaints and which are easiest to collect. Because of this policy, the incidence of taxation tends to fall most heavily on the poor. Their ignorance and poverty usually makes it difficult for them to protest effectively. Their property is all of a tangible sort. If taxes are levied upon it, they cannot be evaded, as may the taxes levied on stocks and bonds. Indirect taxes are usually levied upon articles of common use, often upon the necessities of life, thereby forcing low-income groups to pay more than their share.

#### GOVERNMENTAL INEFFICIENCY

The extent and variety of governmental activities in modern times have rendered it impossible for the average citizen to

understand the purpose of it all. He cannot form his opinions on the basis of the specious arguments presented to him by candidates for office. These conditions permit the rise of a class of office-seekers motivated by a desire for personal gain rather than a desire to serve the public. The result is the "spoils system," familiar to every student of American government. Under this system, government positions are held to be the winnings of the successful party, to be distributed as rewards to faithful party workers. When carried to the extreme, operation of the spoils system results in a change in the personnel of all government-operated enterprises whenever the administration changes. Most government employees are technical workers. They have nothing to do with the determination of policy. Their effectiveness depends upon their training and experience, not upon their party affiliations. To replace these workers *in toto* by a new group, chosen first with reference to party loyalty and only secondarily with reference to fitness for the job, is to encourage a fatal inefficiency in government enterprise.

#### "PORK-BARREL" LEGISLATION

It is inevitable that the expenditure of public money, even for purposes beneficial to the whole nation, may prove to be of special benefit to persons in the locality where the money is spent. Recognizing this fact, legislators who are interested primarily in retaining their positions work hard to have money spent in their respective constituencies. They feel that the best way to serve the interests of the people who elected them is to secure for these people a new post office, bridge, irrigation system, or set of canal locks. In order to accomplish this, it is usually necessary for a number of legislators to band together under an implied or tacit agreement to support each other's projects. The necessity for trading votes in this fashion prevents the exercise of good judgment with regard to the real value of the proposed appropriations. Each legislator is afraid to vote against his colleague's bill for fear his own requests will



be refused. In consequence, appropriations are made for unworthy objects. The country's welfare, it appears, is often entirely lost sight of in the scramble for expenditures.

The legislators are not entirely to blame. They are merely responding to the demands of the electorate, without the approval of which they cannot hold their jobs. "Pork-barrel" legislation indicates, therefore, a low state of public morality. It indicates a willingness of some individuals and sub-groups to profit at the expense of the group as a whole. Whatever may be said in favor of patriotism and loyalty to country by citizens who countenance this kind of system can only be understood as hypocrisy.

#### GRAFT

We have progressed so far in the way of accepting the use of government as a means of exploitation that we take a good deal of graft for granted. While the average American citizen does not tolerate outright theft, he assumes that many public officials will somehow make their offices pay more than the stipulated salary. Appointive positions are too often filled by personal friends or relatives of the appointing officer, even if faithful and efficient servants must be discharged to make room for them. Rules for bidding on the construction of public works are frequently so manipulated as to favor firms friendly to, if not actually owned by, persons in the administration. Friends may be informed in advance of government actions which will affect property values, so that they may, if they choose, make profitable investments. To these and a hundred other forms of "legitimate" graft, the reaction of the public is a feeling of envy rather than resentment. The citizen does not think it is wrong for the official to do "favors" for his friends or to profit from advance knowledge gained through his position. The complacency with which these forms of graft are regarded carries over to some extent in the case of embezzlement, bribery, fee-splitting, and outright theft when committed against the state by public officials. Due to lack of public interest, prosecutions for such crimes are likely to be conducted

perfunctorily, and usually only in the most flagrant cases is anyone punished.

#### THE NATURE OF GRAFT

The existence of graft is due to a failure to distinguish effectively between primary and secondary group relations. In the former, we expect conduct based upon personal likes and dislikes, favoritism, generosity, and good will. In the latter, we expect conduct in conformity with a fixed code under which all persons of a given class are to be treated alike. Thus a victim, swayed by sympathy, may forgive the thief who has wronged him, but a policeman, no matter how sorry he may feel for the culprit, cannot rightly do anything of the sort. His duty demands that he arrest the thief, even if the malefactor should happen to be his brother. But in fact, if the offense is a comparatively minor one—such, for example, as the violation of a traffic ordinance—the policeman would probably not arrest his brother at all. Such action involves the admission of primary-group behavior into a secondary-group situation, where it does not belong.

#### BUREAUCRACY

In bureaucracy, we find the government utilized in still another way for private gain. Whenever any agency of government is set up, with some freedom of control over the expenditure of the money appropriated to it, it tends to become a bureau. Thenceforth its prime purpose may be to enlarge and perpetuate itself, so that the men who have jobs in it may not lose them. This may be done legitimately through unselfish devotion to the avowed objectives of the agency and the achievement of results gratifying to the public. An easier and often more successful way is to advertise the virtues of the agency. The bureau may carry on publicity on its own behalf, extolling its merits and accomplishments, and in this way build up public opinion favorable to its continuance. It may persuade the public of the desirability of still further increasing the number of workers in the bureau and of raising their salaries. The larger

the bureau becomes, the more important it can make itself appear.

Of course, not all government bureaus are objectionable. Many of them are indispensable. It is difficult to distinguish these from the spurious ones. The propaganda is of so insidious a nature that it can seldom be recognized for what it is. A "news release" may be a modest statement of facts or it may be a cleverly disguised advertisement for the bureau.

#### ORGANIZED MINORITIES

It is manifestly impossible for the average voter to know much about the government from direct observation. He must get his knowledge secondhand, from someone who made the observations. The opportunity for the observer to inject his prejudices into his statements is ever present, and the temptation to do so is more than most men can resist. Readers take some cognizance of this and, when the writer is known to be consistently biased, make allowances. They cannot always take such precautions. Often the statements are anonymous, false, or misleading; they are presented as news or facts, with no indication of their source or purpose. Against this kind of propaganda, the voter is helpless. A general suspicion of what appears in the newspaper does no good, since he must believe something.

This is the circumstance which makes it possible for private interests to control public opinion and, consequently, legislation. A comparatively small group of people with good organization can influence legislatures out of all proportion to their numbers. In the first place, they can make themselves heard. They have representatives at the capital who use every wile imaginable to secure votes for the bills they wish enacted. Fortunately, legislators are familiar enough with these tricks to escape most of them, but they cannot withstand the threat of unfavorable publicity. A legislator must hold his electorate; he cannot afford to allow the circulation of statements which would react against him at the next election. Consequently strongly organized minorities which have the means to spread

propaganda can rather easily secure legislation favorable to their interests, often at the expense of the rest of the country. The propaganda is not always directed against the legislator personally. It may consist of so-called scientific research conducted under the auspices of a poor but respectable educational institution in return for funds. It may consist of books and pamphlets placed in the hands of teachers and school children. Or it may be made up of carefully selected news stories presenting the propagandist's side of the case to the exclusion of the other.

The danger of this kind of influence is well illustrated in those countries controlled by men spoken of as dictators. It should not be supposed that these men rule without public support. On the contrary, as judged by public gatherings and by the results of elections, they have much more nearly unanimous and enthusiastic support than any democratic leader could hope for. The objection is that they secure this support by what we consider unfair means. They censor the news; they pour torrents of propaganda over the people; they weed out incorrigible objectors. Under such conditions, the opposition, respectfully recognized by the administrations of such countries as the United States and Great Britain, disappears entirely.

### WAR

The most serious form of political maladjustment is that which breaks out in armed conflict between nations. Theoretically, war may sometimes be a necessity. If a country is invaded by an enemy force, which takes property and enslaves people, the citizens of the invaded country have no choice but to resist. If they succeed in doing so in any organized fashion, the result is war. Similarly, a people may be so heavily oppressed by its own government that the only recourse is rebellion. This brings the rebels in opposition to the defenders of the government in war. In actuality, war seems nearly always to be a necessity, for the situation is not so simple as these statements about it seem to imply. Certainly no country, knowing

itself about to be invaded, would wait patiently for the aggressor to set foot on its soil before taking defensive measures. Knowing well the advantage of immediate readiness in military operations, most countries do not like to delay preparations until their potential enemies are ready to attack them. Preparations for war are therefore almost always begun in advance of the actual invasion, even in advance of the declaration of war.

Now when a nation sets about the business of training soldiers and building battleships, its neighbors find it difficult to believe that the preparations are being made for purposes of defense alone. The defenses of one nation constitute threats of offense to others. These, therefore, must in turn prepare to meet attacks by training soldiers and building battleships, the number of soldiers and battleships being determined, up to the limit of available means, by the number of soldiers and battleships possessed by the surrounding countries. Any increase in the armed forces of one nation must be matched by all the others. Preparation for war becomes a race for supremacy, stopping only when men and money for further increases cannot be wrung from the taxpayers.

The people are likely to become impatient under the burdens imposed upon them. While peace reigns, war seems to them to be a long way off, a remote contingency for which the maintenance of armaments is an unnecessary expense. The idealists among them may go so far as to advocate disarmament through example. The government, more especially those parts of it which are in charge of military affairs, does not view the matter so complacently. It sees in the military activities of other nations a persistent threat of aggression. This viewpoint must be kept before the public mind in all its fearfulness, lest representatives be elected who favor extensive reductions in armament. The world thus comes to a precarious balance, with all the larger nations ready to defend themselves against each other at a moment's notice. Any act, as, for example, the mobilization of troops by one nation, may be interpreted, rightly or wrongly, as an act of aggression. It can be met only by an ultimatum demanding immediate cessation of mobiliza-

tion, backed up by counter-mobilization. Considerations of national honor rarely permit peaceful submission of one nation to the demands of another. A declaration of war or, at least, the beginning of hostilities, under these circumstances is almost inevitable.

Thereupon follows destruction of life and property unparalleled by any other of the numerous misfortunes of mankind. In the World War of 1914-8, over 100,000,000 men were under arms; of these 34,000,000 were wounded and 13,000,000 were killed. The cost of this war reached a total of \$200,000,000,000, a sum equal to about three times the present annual income of the United States. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, our country has spent on war and on preparations for war about \$38,000,000,000, and in 1939 was spending at the rate of about \$2,000,000,000 annually. Still greater expenditures, ultimately consuming a substantial part of our national income, are in prospect for the immediate future. No collective enterprise even remotely approaches in extent and cost the activities carried on by nations for their mutual destruction.

#### PROPOSED REMEDIES

The various forms of political maladjustment described above have not gone unnoticed by reformers. Many plans have been proposed as remedies, some of which have been tried with good results. Others have not progressed beyond the stage of appearing in print. Examples are presented here to indicate the trend of the change likely to take place for some years to come.

It has been suggested that the "voters' strike" could be ended by changing the basis of representation in Congress from a territorial to an interest-group basis. This arrangement would permit people to associate themselves for the purpose of electing representatives regardless of their residences. Persons of similar interests, too few in a given locality to control the election, might thus be numerous enough to secure representation. Such a system would make less necessary the practice of lobbying, which now offers the only available possibility for interest groups to influence legislation, but would interfere with the

process of compromise, so indispensable to action by a government composed of representatives from diverse groups. Under the present system, that representative is himself the product of compromise; if he were elected by a particular group, he could never give way, and the legislature would be deadlocked as a result.

In the civil courts of a few cities, the special needs of poor litigants have been met by private benevolent organizations providing free or cheap legal aid. Some States have established small-claims courts, to which may be brought easily and cheaply all suits involving small amounts. In the criminal courts, public defenders have been experimented with to offset the disadvantage of the defendant who cannot afford to employ an attorney. Probation, instead of jail, and fines payable on the installment plan are methods used in a few places to avoid unduly penalizing the poor.

Income and inheritance taxes have come to be the accepted methods of assessing the costs of government in accordance with ability to pay, but other forms of taxation are still in general use. The civil service system of securing and hiring government employees has eliminated some of the bad features of the spoils system and has prevented much governmental inefficiency. Complete publicity for all governmental activity has been recommended as a means of directing attention to graft, nepotism, and "pork-barrel" legislation. The success of publicity would depend upon the sensitivity of public opinion to the conduct of government officials. Numerous recent instances of the public's failure to condemn flagrant abuses of which it was fully aware do not encourage the belief that publicity would do much to prevent official misconduct.

The elimination of war appears to be a hopeless undertaking. The organization of the world into independent, national groups, each in economic competition with all the others, makes occasional resort to force apparently a natural process. Actually there is nothing more natural about war than about any other form of social behavior. Embedded in the folkways of Western civilization, war invariably comes to the public mind as the

proper mechanism for resolving international difficulties involving the national honor. International federations of peoples designed to coerce individual nations into abandoning war are likely always to fail, because the federation itself must be prepared to wage war, if its rules are to be enforced. Possibly significant reductions in armament may be attained by agreement and the probability of war somewhat reduced, but it is clear that even complete disarmament will not guarantee permanent, world-wide peace, as long as the belief prevails that war is inevitable.

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## PHYSICAL DEFECTIVENESS

BY physical defectiveness we mean a condition of the individual in which his physical powers are permanently impaired. Naturally, the degree of impairment may vary from a negligible failing to total disability. Nearly everyone has some physical imperfection, but unless it is serious enough to require special adjustment on part of the individual, it does not constitute a social problem within the meaning of the term as here used.

Physical defectiveness is of two kinds, affecting, respectively, the sensory organs and the muscles and bones. The first form results in a diminution of the victim's powers of communication; the second in a lessening of his powers of locomotion and manipulation. Blindness and deafness are the most common examples of physical defectiveness resulting in diminished powers of communication. Specially adapted methods must be provided to enable persons so afflicted to participate in social life. Loss of limbs or loss of the use of limbs, as in paralysis, is the most frequent form of defect interfering with locomotion and manipulation. The two forms are not quite mutually exclusive. Obviously, blindness hampers movement, and loss of the hands make writing a difficult task.

## DEFECTIVENESS AMONG PRIMITIVES

Primitive people did not, so far as we know, recognize in physical defectiveness a serious social problem. The very absence of such recognition minimized the problem by permitting the ruthless forces of selection to remove the unfit. Few physically defective persons survived long under conditions of primitive life. The individual whose keenness of eye or fleetness of foot fell far below the average became easy prey to his enemies,

human or otherwise. The outcome of accidents which befell primitive men was most frequently either death or complete recovery. There were no machines to mangle and maim their attendants; there were no surgeons to patch up the remnant of a man left by an accident so that he might go on living, a burden to himself and to the group. When congenital defect appeared, it was drastically dealt with. Weak or imperfect children were summarily killed or exposed to the elements until they perished. The practice was defended on the ground of necessity.<sup>1</sup>

#### PHYSICAL DEFECTIVENESS IN ANCIENT CIVILIZATION

With the development of economic techniques, the accumulation of wealth, and the stratification of society, the physically defective survived in larger numbers than before. Individuals who belonged to privileged groups and who could thereby command an income without working did not find physical disability an insuperable handicap to comfortable living. The greater ease of earning a living so greatly reduced the burden of rearing children that infanticide became less frequent, with the result that more defective children survived. The division of labor provided occupations which could be carried on in spite of physical defect. Even the very early civilizations offered opportunities whereby defective individuals could earn a living. A blind man might become a poet or a singer; a deaf man might engage in painting or carpentry; a lame man might become the king's jester. But obviously such individuals were less adaptable than normal persons to the demands of the economic system. The range of choice available to them was limited. They were, therefore, likely to become unemployed and unemployable. When this happened, they fell into want and the problem of the physical defective appeared. For with the development of civilization there occurred also the development of sympathy for suffering. Although it did not provide for systematic relief, sympathy made mendicancy possible and enabled at least some of the disabled to exist after a fashion.

<sup>1</sup> See Sumner, William G., *Folkways*, 1906, Chapter 7.

They were not, of course, treated with the kindness and consideration which we regard as ideal today. Popular beliefs of the distant past held that physical defect was due to supernatural causes. Its victims were therefore often shunned and feared, sometimes even denied the privilege of participating in social life with normal persons. That this kind of treatment at the hands of society caused much personal disorganization among the defectives cannot be doubted. It is likely that a good many of them suffered from mental derangement in addition to physical disability.

#### THE HUMANITARIAN MOVEMENT

With the development of the Christian belief in the infinite value of the human soul, a higher evaluation of human life also appeared. Sympathy existed before the Christian era, of course, but it is probable that the teachings of this religion gave the earliest expression to the series of attitudes which have gone into the making of the humanitarian movement. Among other factors contributing to it were those tending to add to the security of life for people in general. The development of economic techniques made the business of earning a living less uncertain. The extension of commercial relations freed men to some extent from the disastrous effects of local crop failures and accidental destruction of the food supply. Crop failure over very large areas is comparatively rare. A system of good roads and a willingness to share or trade surplus food products will avert most famines. The discovery of methods of controlling and preventing disease has also added greatly to the security of life. Probably the increased size of political units has had a similar effect through lessening the frequency of war. Altogether, the result of these factors has been to make the continuation of good health and life something to be counted on by every man. More and more plans for careers and future activities can be undertaken without considering the chances of sickness or death. Although ultimately inevitable, death or disability enters but slightly into the calculations of the modern young man. The dictum that familiarity breeds contempt is

no less true in the realm of human misery than outside of it. The sight of numerous dead or dying persons soon arouses in the observer an indifference which suppresses sympathy. The unusualness of such sights in modern life has rendered people more sensitive to them, so that efforts to eliminate them are increased. Thus is set in operation the humanitarian movement, which resulted first in the recognition of human sufferings and second in efforts to alleviate them.

### THE BLIND

In a society where there is little division of labor, the disadvantages of being blind are so great as to permit but few sightless individuals to survive. With the advance of civilization, this condition has changed radically. The blind were among the first of the various abnormal groups to appeal to general sympathy. Their apparent helplessness and the darkness of their lives inspired pity in the breasts of all who saw them. The development of almsgiving under the auspices of the Christian church provided a considerable amount of money to be dispensed to the needy. None was more eligible to receive charity than the blind man. Because of this condition and because of the low state of knowledge regarding the cure and prevention of blindness, the blind population increased relatively faster than the population as a whole. From the uncertain reports of early censuses, it may be concluded that the proportion of blind persons in the populations of Europe and the United States continued to increase until the middle of the nineteenth century, reaching a maximum of about one-tenth of one per cent. In tropical countries, the proportion of blind may be twice as great. The blind population of the United States, according to the census of 1930, was 63,593, a ratio of about 52 per 100,000 population. Indications are that this figure falls far short of the actual number. A study by the American Foundation for the Blind estimates the number well in excess of 100,000, and there is some evidence that the total may reach 200,000. Though fairly evenly distributed over the country, this population shows great differences from State to State.

Wyoming and North Dakota show the lowest ratios, 23.5 and 28.6 per 100,000 population, respectively; Missouri and New Mexico the highest, 106.9 and 143.4, respectively.

Distribution of the blind differs markedly from that of the general population with regard to age, sex, and race. The upper age groups show much larger percentages than the lower; the ratio of males to 100 females is approximately 132; and the ratio of blindness among Negroes is 76 per 100,000. There is an abnormally large amount of blindness among the Indians and Mexicans.

### THE CAUSES OF BLINDNESS

The causes of blindness fall naturally into three groups: heredity, disease, and accident. The first of these causes about 25 per cent of the cases of blindness. Since ordinarily nothing can be done for individuals blind from birth, it is fortunate that natural selection tends to eliminate congenital blindness. The handicap of blindness in the life of early man was too great to allow more than a few of its victims to survive. Of those who survived, scarcely any were able to meet the demands of parenthood. Even now, despite all the special care given to the blind, they cannot well rear children. The result is a process of selection through which hereditary blindness is continuously being weeded out.

Disease remains the most important cause of blindness, but its threat is diminishing with the extension of knowledge and treatment of eye diseases. Formerly 25 per cent or more of blindness was caused by ophthalmia neonatorum, a disease caused by gonorrheal infection of the eyes at birth. A simple prophylactic has now come into general use, many States and countries having laws requiring its application by physicians and midwives. Trachoma, a contagious disease, is also diminishing in importance as a cause of blindness, through isolation of cases and improved treatment. Cataract is primarily an affliction of old age. Its chief symptom is a thickening of the crystalline lens with resulting opacity of the afflicted parts. Surgical treatment has been successful in many cases. Atrophy

of the optic nerve, responsible for about five per cent of the cases of blindness, has not yet yielded to treatment. In old age, syphilis, myopia, and glaucoma are common causes of blindness, the latter accounting for one-fourth to one-third of the cases.

Accidents cause about 16 per cent of the cases of blindness, and are especially frequent among men. Most injuries occur in connection with occupational activity. Flying particles, chips, or sparks may damage the eye so seriously as to destroy vision. Fumes, chemicals, and exceptionally strong light may have a similar result.<sup>2</sup> The World War blinded 10,000 men. Only about 100 of these were Americans.

#### PROBLEMS OF THE BLIND

From the time when society first extended its sympathy to the blind until the close of the eighteenth century, they were regarded as helpless dependents. Precluded by their handicap from carrying on ordinary occupations in the ordinary way, they were not expected to play a normal rôle in the world of men. The institutions maintained for them were asylums, places of retreat, where the inmates lived in such comfort as the generosity of the public would permit. Some blind persons were cared for by their relatives or friends; others kept themselves alive by mendicancy. This last method was so common that we still think of blindness and begging as intimately associated. The blind beggar is one of the most familiar characters in literature. So unusual was it for a blind man to make his way in the world by any other means that such instances were noted as remarkable or miraculous, and not as something that might reasonably be expected of any blind person in full possession of his other faculties.

#### EDUCATIONAL METHODS

Significant progress in helping the blind to participate in normal economic and social life came with the recognition that they can be educated through methods specially suited to their

<sup>2</sup> See Best, Harry, *Blindness and the Blind in the United States*, 1934, pp. 3-120.

abilities. The use of movable type in printing must have suggested to many the possibilities of an alphabet which could be read by the sense of touch. Raised characters embossed on paper were invented about 1784 by Valentin Haüy (1745-1822), a Frenchman, whose successful experiments in teaching a blind boy, François Lesueur, led to the founding of a school for the blind in Paris. The difficulty of recognizing by touch the ordinary forms of the Roman alphabet did not at once occur to the teachers of the blind. More than forty years elapsed before improvements appeared. Most of those at first suggested were simplifications or modifications of the Roman alphabet. One of them, the Moon system, is still widely used. In 1829, Louis Braille (1809-1852) a blind instructor at the Institution Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles, Paris, adapted a point alphabet originally invented by M. Barbier. The forms of the letters in this system bear no resemblance to ordinary print, but are much more easily written and read by the blind. Numerous improvements have been made in the Braille system since its first publication. American Braille, invented in 1878 by a blind teacher, J. W. Smith, has been widely adopted in American schools. Special devices for teaching geography, mathematics, music and other subjects have made it possible for blind pupils to learn almost anything in which the color sense is not absolutely necessary.<sup>8</sup>

#### SCHOOLS FOR THE BLIND

The first school for the blind in America was provided for in Boston in 1830, but it did not actually receive pupils until 1832. A similar institution was founded in New York in 1831; the Society of Friends established a school in Philadelphia in 1833. Other States which founded schools early are: Ohio, 1837; Virginia, 1839; Kentucky, 1842; Tennessee, 1844. Except for subsidies to printing establishments and the granting of free postage to certain publications for the blind by the Federal government, the care and education of this group has been left, until within the last few years, exclusively to the several States.

<sup>8</sup> See Illingworth, W. H., *History of the Education of the Blind*, 1910.

So far as children are concerned, the responsibility has been met fairly well. Forty-two States now maintain schools for the education of blind children; the other States have made provision for sending their blind pupils to outside schools. Some States supply readers for blind university students.

For the aid of the adult blind, the States had made little progress before the passage of the Social Security Act of 1935. Many of those handicapped by blindness find it impossible to make a living and necessarily become dependent. In the past they were commonly given such aid as the community provided in the almshouse. Under the Social Security Act, however, a Federal subsidy was offered to the States which would set up and administer a satisfactory pension system for them. All but four of the States now have such systems, through which pensions are paid to 70,000 blind persons.

#### VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Formal school training is of greater importance to the blind than to the seeing. Denied the innumerable pleasures of vision, sightless persons must find a large portion of their satisfactions in reading. In supplying the technique through which the blind learn to enjoy reading, the school is an invaluable agency in adjusting them to the social world. Yet this kind of education is not enough. The blind need also vocational training. Being more limited in their choices and being even at best handicapped in their competition with the seeing, they must attain a high degree of proficiency in their occupations if they are to succeed. In the case of persons who lose their sight after they have reached adulthood, there is a strong tendency to give up the struggle for economic independence. It often happens that the injury or disease which causes the loss of sight makes the victim an invalid for a time. During this period, he may become so far adjusted to his helplessness that he cannot make the effort to overcome it later on. If his injuries have entitled him to compensation, he may have a small amount of money at his disposal. While it lasts, he is subject to the danger of developing the habit of



helplessness to such a degree that he will never be able to take a hand in the struggle for a livelihood again.

To prevent this most unsatisfactory outcome, vocational training is necessary. Only rarely will the blinded individual find it possible to continue in the same occupation which he had before losing his sight. He must learn a new trade or profession. The sooner the process of learning can be begun the better. Having something to do will help to keep him from brooding over his loss, and the ability to do something useful and profitable will restore to him a feeling of self-respect. When he can support himself or himself and others, he acquires a sense of being a person in his own right.

As recognition of the desirability of vocational training becomes more general, schools for the blind are placing more emphasis upon this phase of education. The occupations taught are selected with the view of combining activities in which blindness is not a serious handicap with those in which profitable employment may be secured. Among the available occupations successfully practiced by blind men are music, basket weaving, poultry raising, massage, stenography, and teaching in schools for the blind.

#### SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

More important than any other kind of training imparted in school is the training that enables the blinded individual to accept his condition without bitterness and discouragement and to adjust himself to it. He must realize for himself that there are still open to him many opportunities for living fully and pleasantly. Adjustment of this sort may be best begun by contact with persons who have already made such adjustment for themselves, who understand and sympathize without sentimentalizing and who point the way to success by their own cheerful example.

The following quotation indicates the nature of the blind man's need for adjustment and how it may be met.

A guide leads in the blinded soldier and finds Sir Arthur standing to welcome him; somehow or other the hands of the two blind

men meet. Sitting on the sofa, still holding the hand of his visitor, Sir Arthur begins at once to talk of his future.

No one can understand the power that one man has over another. If you were present at one of these interviews, if you attempted to analyse Sir Arthur's secret, you would probably say that he took it for granted that the blinded man was going to make a success of being blind. In a word, the man finds himself swept along by Sir Arthur's unfaltering convictions; he has no time to say that he doubts his powers, no time to break down in expressing his sense of helplessness,—this man who has hardly entered the room before he is discussing whether in twelve months' time he shall be the working-owner of a cobbler's shop, or a poultry farmer, set up in his own little estate, or making such an income as he has never made before as a skilled masseur. There are other things to engage his interest. This man who was perhaps a coal miner finds himself discussing how soon he may be able to pass the test that will make him the possessor of a typewriter, whether he would like to take up rowing as a recreation, whether he has a turn for speaking and would like to join the debating club. He notices he is being talked to just as if he were not blind at all, or at all events as if the loss of sight were not going to stand in the way of anything that he sought. He begins to think of himself as in the old days.

And you see the change in the man taking place, you hear a new tone in his voice—he has been carried over the dead point and you realise that there will be no going back in his mind.<sup>4</sup>

#### PREVENTION

Since so little blindness is congenital and since so much of it is the by-product of disease or accident, it follows that many cases of blindness could have been prevented. The knowledge possessed by physicians about the control of infectious diseases of the eye is sufficient to enable them, with the co-operation of society, to reduce these diseases to a very small number of cases. The same is true of diseases which cause blindness indirectly, such as smallpox. Greater care in industrial processes involving risk to the eyes will, as a matter of course, reduce the number of blinding accidents. Blasting, lathe operating, and chemical manufacturing are especially danger-

<sup>4</sup> From *Victory Over Blindness*, by Arthur Pearson, copyright, 1919, by Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York.

ous and consequently in need of extra precautionary measures. In view of the overwhelming tragedy of blindness, it appears that society would be justified in exerting itself to the utmost to prevent it. The most promising method is education. Systematic instruction in precautionary methods and in the necessity for utilizing them would prevent many persons from taking needless risks. In cases where the means of prevention cost money, it is necessary to require their use by law; business competition may otherwise keep them from being applied.

### THE DEAF

At least a million people in the United States suffer from defective hearing. Most of them manage to lead approximately normal lives by occupying front rows at lectures or the theater, using mechanical aids to hearing, or asking their friends to speak louder. They miss much conversation, especially the nuances, but are not handicapped in communicating their own impressions to others in ordinary speech. Even if, late in life, they lose their hearing entirely, they can usually get on well enough. They have problems of adjustment to their defect, but since they are or have been able to utilize hearing in the acquisition of speech, they are much better off than those who have always been totally deaf. The latter class, on account of the great difficulty they encounter in learning to speak, and the fact that most of them fail to do so, are usually called deaf mutes.

According to the Census of 1930, there were in the United States in that year 57,123 deaf mutes, distributed as to sex in the ratio of about 105 males to 100 females. The proportion of deaf mutes in the population is slightly higher in the northern States than in the southern, with the heaviest concentration near the Great Lakes. Delaware has the lowest proportion of deaf mutes, with a ratio of 26.8 per 100,000 population; Kansas has the highest, with a ratio of 62.4. The doubly handicapped group, the blind deaf mutes, numbered almost 2,000 in 1930. Only 169 such persons were reported in 1920.

The great difference between these two figures leads to the conclusion that the 1930 census of deaf mutes may also have been more accurate than the previous one. If this view is correct, the considerable increase in the number and proportion of deaf mutes reported in the United States may be explained without assuming an actual increase.

#### CAUSES OF DEAFNESS

The protected position of the organs of hearing keeps them from injury by accident. Few cases of deafness result from this cause. Diseases of the ear or of the respiratory passages are fairly common and rather frequently lead to loss of hearing. Many of the so-called diseases of childhood, such as measles, scarlet fever, and whooping cough, often bring about partial or complete deafness as an after-effect. Unlike blindness, deafness is frequently caused by congenital defect, over one-third of all deaf persons having been born deaf.<sup>5</sup> Two reasons for the prevalence of congenital deafness are plausible. In the first place, the deaf are not too seriously handicapped in the economic world to support families. Second, the social isolation imposed upon them forces them into the company of each other with the inevitable result of their intermarriage and the perpetuation of their defect.

#### PROBLEMS OF THE DEAF

The problems of the deaf may well be contrasted with those of the blind. As stated in the preceding paragraph, the deaf are comparatively free from economic handicaps. There are, to be sure, large occupational fields, such as trade and transportation, closed to them, but so many others are still open to them that the deaf encounter no serious difficulty in finding suitable employment. In the matter of social adjustment, their lot is not so easy. Denied the use of speech, the natural medium of communication, the deaf must resort to clumsy gestures to express their meanings. They can see the results of speech in the quick response, the perfect understanding

<sup>5</sup> Best, Harry, *The Deaf*, 1914, p. 7.

it brings about, but must themselves remain outsiders. Since it is only in speech that the finer shades of emotion and meaning may be communicated, the deaf individual can never become completely *en rapport* with another. Consequently, his personal life is likely to remain more or less undeveloped and to function on a lower level than that of the average hearing individual. Sometimes the deaf person realizes vaguely what he is missing and develops attitudes of resentment and suspicion.

#### SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF

Until about a century and a half ago the deaf, like the blind, were considered uneducable. Their inability to speak was confused with stupidity. They were classed with the feeble-minded and denied the civil rights of normal persons. The case of an educated deaf mute mentioned by Bede in 685 was apparently not duplicated for the next eight hundred years. Jerome Cardan, an Italian writing in the sixteenth century, was the first man to record the belief that speech was not necessary to learning the meaning of written words. A Spanish monk of the same period succeeded in teaching deaf mutes to speak. After 1600, attempts to educate the deaf became more frequent and numerous books on the subject appeared in Europe. A school for the deaf, one of the earliest in Europe, was opened about 1760 in Edinburgh by Thomas Braidwood, who became highly successful as a teacher. Two of his sons and a nephew entered the field to carry on the methods he had developed. The first American school for the deaf was opened in 1817 in Connecticut under the leadership of the Rev. T. H. Gallaudet, who had gone to Europe the year before to learn the methods of teaching employed there. Other States soon followed Connecticut in establishing institutions of their own. Some of the pioneer States and the dates of founding of their schools are: New York, 1818; Pennsylvania, 1823; Kentucky, 1823; Ohio, 1829. There are now schools for the deaf in forty-four States. Day schools are maintained by a number of municipalities. The higher

education of the deaf is provided for through Gallaudet University, Washington, D. C., a Federally supported institution, established in 1864.

#### EDUCATIONAL METHODS

Early attempts to educate the deaf took the form of systematizing the sign language and teaching it in conjunction with reading and writing. It was soon discovered that lack of association with the experiences represented by the symbols made them little more than meaningless exercises for the pupils. This difficulty was overcome by building up associations between the symbols and the appropriate experiences instead of between the two kinds of symbols only.

But even complete knowledge of the written word is insufficient. Writing is too slow and unwieldy as a means of ordinary communication, and only the deaf understand the sign language. Teachers of the deaf have therefore introduced methods calculated to enable the deaf to participate in normal social life. By ingenious pedagogical devices, some of the deaf can be taught to speak. Lip reading enables them to understand the speech of others. Some deaf persons become so proficient in these arts that their handicap is unnoticed to all but close observers.

#### SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

The tendency of the deaf to resent their isolation sometimes takes the form of objection to exemptions and immunities granted to them by the civil authorities. They have insisted, for example, upon being required to pay poll taxes, when State laws were passed to grant them exemption. They do not like to be regarded as a group requiring special consideration on account of their disability. For the same reason, they do not tolerate the use of deafness by mendicants as a means of appealing to public sympathy. All this indicates on their part a feeling of inferiority and a deep desire to lead normal lives. To give the members of this group the means of attaining this desire is properly the chief end of their education.

Speech and lip-reading go far in the right direction, but the end cannot be reached by teaching the deaf alone. There still remain traces of the attitudes of the past which held the deaf to be incapable of learning anything. These must be removed by educating the hearing population to appreciate the inherent capacities of the deaf.

#### PREVENTION

The considerable reduction in the extent of diseases incidentally causing deafness has already decreased the number of cases of deafness due to this cause. It is to be hoped, of course, that the reduction may be carried still further. With respect to hereditary deafness, the outlook is not so bright. Marriage among the deaf might be discouraged or even prohibited. Deaf persons might be advised not to intermarry or to have children, or they might be urged to submit to sterilization. It is likely, however, that attempts of this nature would strongly militate against the deaf reaching a normal adjustment in society. Eugenics, therefore, promises no practicable method which will quickly eliminate deafness. For this most desirable end we must await further developments.

#### THE DISABLED

The cripple of ancient times had so little chance of surviving that the number of such persons was always small. Those who managed to maintain themselves were regarded with mixed feelings, sometimes feared for the supernatural power they were supposed to possess, sometimes hated because they bore the "curse of God." Sympathy for the cripple as a fellow human being is of recent development. Two centuries ago, people laughed at the hunchback as we now laugh at a clown. They saw his grotesqueness, not his helplessness. In some ways it was fortunate that physical disability frequently brought with it an early death.

About the middle of the sixteenth century, surgery advanced for the first time to the point where amputations could be made with fair degree of success. A century later saw the

introduction of machinery which made recourse to amputation more frequently necessary. From that day to the present, the number of physically disabled in the population of Europe and America has steadily increased.

#### DEFINITION

The enumeration of the physically disabled other than the blind and deaf is difficult on account of the uncertain meaning of the term. The man who has lost a finger could hardly be called a cripple. Only in exceptional cases would such a loss prevent his carrying on the occupation he was engaged in before the accident. Even if he were obliged to change his occupation, his choice would be so great that he would have little difficulty in finding a satisfactory substitute. On the other hand, there would scarcely be any question about regarding as crippled a man who had lost both legs, even though as an author, for example, he could still continue his profession. It appears, therefore, that physical disability cannot be determined on the basis of its effect upon the occupation of a given individual, but since it is clearly connected with occupation, it must be judged in occupational terms. It may be assumed that he is physically disabled whose range of choice in occupation is greatly and permanently curtailed by his disability. The loss of a hand or a foot or the loss of the normal use of a hand or a foot unquestionably constitutes disability under this definition.<sup>6</sup> With respect to more serious defects, no difficulty of definition is encountered.

#### NUMBERS

The total number of cripples in the United States is about 2,000,000.<sup>7</sup> Of these, 350,000, about 2.5 per 1,000 of the general population, are under sixteen.<sup>8</sup> The World War crippled 4,000,000 men, 200,000 of whom were Americans. Due to the nature of the causes of physical disability, local variations in the

<sup>6</sup> See Kessler, Henry H., *The Crippled and the Disabled*, 1935, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-3.

<sup>8</sup> Heck, Arch O., *Education of Crippled Children*, United States Office of Education Bulletin No. 11, 1930, p. 2.



ratio of cripples and in the form of their disability are common. Infantile paralysis often appears in local epidemics, and localized industries may produce disabling injuries of a particular sort. The sex ratio among adult cripples is much higher than among juveniles. The difference is accounted for by the greater liability of adult males to industrial accident.

#### CAUSES

The great population of crippled persons is made up of the survivors of disease or accident which, but for medical skill or good luck, would have killed them. The causes of disability are therefore the same as those responsible for a considerable number of deaths. The causal factors differ according to age groups.

Roughly 45 per cent of children for whom special provision must be made in schools for cripples are there because of acute infection affecting the brain or spinal cord—chiefly poliomyelitis. Twenty per cent have been damaged by tuberculosis of the bones or joints; 5 per cent by other infections of bone; 15 per cent had injuries of the nervous system at birth; 6 per cent have congenital deformities the causes of which are not known; 8 per cent received mechanical injury from accidents after birth. About 1 per cent have been crippled by rickets.<sup>9</sup>

Adults are more likely to be crippled by accident than by disease, though certain disorders usually spoken of as industrial diseases also figure as important factors. According to reports released by the National Safety Council, the death toll of accident in the United States for 1938 was about 95,000, with about 9,200,000 non-fatal injuries. Of those not fatally injured, over 200,000 were permanently disabled to some extent. Automobiles were responsible for about 32,000 deaths and about twice as many cripples. Many of the victims of car accidents are small children playing in the street and youthful drivers who have not yet learned to be careful of themselves and others. Over 30,000 deaths and 140,000 permanent in-

<sup>9</sup> Heck, Arch O., *Education of Crippled Children*, United States Office of Education Bulletin No. 11, 1930, p. 22.

juries result annually from accidents in homes. Occupational accidents, led by agriculture, take over 16,000 lives and make 65,000 cripples. Other kinds of accidents, including falls, burns, drownings, accidents with firearms, and travel accidents other than those occasioned by automobiles account for 18,000 deaths and 60,000 permanent injuries.<sup>10</sup> The annual cost of accident to the people of the United States in 1938 was estimated by the National Safety Council at \$3,200,000,000. Due chiefly to reductions in automobile accidents, the 1938 record is distinctly better than those of the previous two years.

#### PROBLEMS OF THE CRIPPLE

The great need of the cripple may be summed up in the word education. Second to this, but still highly important, especially in the case of the juvenile cripple, is treatment for the purpose of curing or alleviating the disability. Although we habitually think of the cripple as permanently disabled, there are many cases which, if properly treated, may be much improved, and some which may be cured entirely. When a cure is possible, no effort is too great to attain it. There still exists an aversion to deformities or physical abnormalities which makes it difficult for the cripple to find employment or to maintain social contacts on a fully normal basis. Most persons probably feel sympathy for the disabled person and would never purposely discriminate against him, but they feel an uneasiness in his presence which results in avoidance. There is also a much exaggerated general belief in the occupational inefficiency of the cripple, not justified by the facts yet serious as a bar to employment.

To equip the crippled child properly, it is necessary to provide him at the same time with a school and a hospital. Ordinarily he cannot attend the public school with normal children, or, if he can, the instruction in such a school may not be suitable to his capacities and needs. It has often happened in the past that on account of the difficulties encountered in attending the ordinary public school the crippled child has

<sup>10</sup> See National Safety Council, *Accident Facts for 1936*.

been allowed to remain at home, where he received no formal education at all. An important preliminary to the work of educating cripples, therefore, is to find them and introduce them to the agencies existing and operating especially for their benefit. The crippled child faces the necessity of competing in the economic world with persons of normal physical powers. He can hope to succeed only if he is at least as efficient as the normal worker. This is possible only by careful selection of occupation, followed by intensive training in the required techniques. During the course of his school life, he should also receive such medical and surgical treatment as is likely to improve his physical condition.

The problem of the person who becomes a cripple after reaching adulthood is somewhat different, and in some respects more serious. Usually his condition is the result of an accident. He has to spend some time, months perhaps, convalescing from the shock and illness following the injury. He then finds himself unable to go back to his old job and, since he knows no other, he is unemployable. At this stage he is quite likely to become discouraged with his prospects. If he postpones his attempt to adjust himself until his compensation money is gone, his case may be sad indeed. Discouragement, despondency, and an overwhelming sense of defeat may cause him to cease all effort to "come back." With self-respect shattered, he slips easily into the habit of dependency. If his relatives do not support him, he may become a beggar, shamelessly exhibiting the stump of his lost arm or leg to the public in his attempt to arouse sympathy.

For such an individual, a reorganization of personality is necessary. Before his injury, he probably secured a major portion of his satisfactions and maintained his social status through his occupation. His contacts are likely to have grown up largely among his fellow workers, whose good opinion he has learned to rely upon as the source of the approval which he must have to live. When he can no longer work, he has nowhere to go. He cannot return to the shop; he has no rôle to play in the industrial organization. Ordinarily he has

no intellectual interests to occupy him; besides, the loss of his earning power is likely to worry him too much to allow him to think of other things. He must have help quickly.

#### SCHOOLS FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN

The first school for crippled children was established in Paris in 1784,<sup>11</sup> but it was not until more than a hundred years later that the public school authorities of the United States began to assume the responsibility of educating pupils whose physical defects prevented their attending the regular schools. Chicago organized the first special classes for cripples in 1899. By 1928, about 85 cities had made provision for educating crippled children, most of these provisions having been made since 1915. The International Society for Crippled Children, founded in 1921, is the chief private organization devoting itself to the education and medical care of all crippled children in the United States.

The educational needs of crippled children are met in two ways; by special classes in the regular public schools or by special schools. A few cities employ both methods. In some instances the schools are located near or adjoining orthopedic hospitals and are run in connection with them. Since the majority of cripples have difficulties of locomotion, the school-room must be specially arranged for them. Stairways cannot readily be used nor great distances traversed. If the pupils do not live in the institution, buses must be provided to take them from and to their homes. Caretakers are necessary to help those who cannot move around by themselves. The subjects taught are virtually the same as those offered by the regular school, though the rate of progress is necessarily somewhat slower. Emphasis is placed upon physical exercise and training as part of the orthopedic treatment found in practically every school.

Though organized and operated by the local public school authorities, the schools for crippled children are in a few instances given financial aid by the State. This may be done

<sup>11</sup> Watson, Frederick, *Civilization and the Cripple*, 1930, p. 31.

by paying a part of the teacher's salary, by granting a specified sum to the district for each crippled pupil enrolled, or by defraying the extra cost of maintaining the schools for crippled children.<sup>12</sup>

#### EDUCATION OF ADULT CRIPPLES

The need of adult cripples being primarily for occupational readjustment, education for them has taken the form of vocational training. Comparatively rare before 1917, vocational rehabilitation of cripples received a great impetus after the World War. The rehabilitation process for disabled soldiers resulted in the restoration of about 24,000 men. The effort to aid disabled soldiers still continues, but has now taken the form of special advantages in employment. The necessity for educating industrial cripples still remains, however, and is gradually coming to receive the attention its importance justifies. Insurance companies, employers, the State and the man himself are realizing that the most economical procedure is to restore the individual to a self-supporting status as rapidly as possible. To this end, schools for re-educating adult cripples have been established. Most of them are privately supported, but the States are beginning to recognize their responsibility through State aid. With 80,000 victims of industrial accident requiring rehabilitation each year, the re-education of cripples promises to become an important phase of social welfare activity.

#### CURING THE CRIPPLE

The development of orthopedic surgery in the nineteenth century has made possible the cure of many cases which in earlier times would have been considered hopeless. Devices for teaching cripples to acquire the use of limbs through exercise have also done much to restore the disabled to normal life. Physiotherapy and occupational therapy are names given to some of the forms of treatment used. This treatment not only aids in the strengthening of weak muscles through exer-

<sup>12</sup> See Heck, Arch O., *Education of Crippled Children*, United States Office of Education Bulletin No. 11, 1930.

cise, but gives the patient confidence, will power, and hope—all of which are necessary to his recovery. Private benevolence has done a great deal by way of starting hospitals equipped to care for cripples, particularly children. The Shriners have contributed many millions of dollars to the erection and maintenance of a system of orthopedic hospitals. The Elks and other clubs and fraternal orders have made large gifts for similar purposes.

### PREVENTION

The course to be followed by a program of preventive measures for physical defectiveness is clear; reduce the number of crippling diseases and accidents. This is, as a matter of fact, not as difficult as society's neglect would seem to indicate. Tuberculosis can be prevented in most cases. Though infantile paralysis has not as yet yielded to preventive measures, isolation of cases seems to be of some value in checking the spread of the disease. The safeguarding of dangerous machinery and dangerous positions for workmen will eliminate most of the risks of employment. Already a great deal of progress is evident. The problem can be solved through application, by co-operative effort, of knowledge already at hand.

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## MENTAL DEFICIENCY

JUST as people differ from one another in stature, strength, or any other characteristic, so they also differ in mental capacity. Some individuals learn more rapidly, remember more easily, and reason more effectively than the average person; others perform poorly in any kind of mental activity. When members of the latter group, by reason of the inadequacy of their mental powers, are unable to maintain themselves in the community at the minimum standard required by society, they are adjudged feeble-minded.

It will be recognized at once that since societies differ in their demands upon the individual, the limits of feeble-mindedness may vary widely. Thus a man who could lead a satisfactory and independent life in an isolated country village might have too low a mentality to live successfully in the modern city. In the rural environment he would be considered normal; in the urban environment he would be considered feeble-minded. Furthermore, not all the feeble-minded have minds of equal capacity. There are some who cannot adjust themselves to any social environment, however simple. Those at the very bottom of the scale manifest almost no mental activity whatsoever and are, consequently, utterly dependent. Those at the upper end may lead useful and happy lives, independent of all but slight supervision.

## DEFINITION

The variables involved make precise definition of feeble-mindedness difficult. Davies writes:

No one definition has been generally accepted, but there seems to be substantial agreement that the term, feeble-mindedness, contains three essential and inter-related concepts: (1) marked limita-

tion or deficiency of intelligence, frequently associated with other shortcomings of personality, which is due to (2) lack of normal development rather than to mental disease or deterioration, and which manifests itself in (3) social and economic incompetence.<sup>1</sup>

The desirability of providing different kinds of care for the various levels of feeble-mindedness has necessitated a division of mental defectives into classes, appropriately defined. A good example of such a classification is found in English law:

Idiots are now defined legally as "persons in whose case there exists mental defectiveness of such degree that they are unable to guard themselves against common physical dangers."

Imbeciles are "persons in whose case there exists mental defectiveness which though not amounting to idiocy is yet so pronounced that they are incapable of managing themselves and their affairs, or, in the case of children, of being taught to do so."

Feeble-minded persons are "persons in whose case there exists mental defectiveness which, though not amounting to imbecility, is yet so pronounced that they require care, supervision and control for their own protection or for the protection of others, or, in the case of children, that they appear to be temporarily incapable by reason of such defectiveness of receiving proper benefit from the instruction in ordinary schools."

Moral defectives are "persons in whose case there exists mental defectiveness coupled with strongly vicious or criminal propensities, and who require care, supervision and control for the protection of others."<sup>2</sup>

#### EXTENT OF MENTAL DEFECT

Since feeble-mindedness can be ascribed to a person only if he has failed to make an acceptable adjustment to social life, the number of mentally defective persons in a group depends as much upon what the group demands from its members as upon their native powers. It is to be expected, therefore, that the number of persons adjudged feeble-minded will increase as we raise the minimum requirements of education

<sup>1</sup> Davies, S. P., *Social Control of the Mentally Deficient*, pp. 1-2. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1930.

<sup>2</sup> Berry, Richard J. and Gordon, R. G., *The Mental Defective*, pp. 13-14. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1931.



and economic efficiency. In preliterate society the inability to learn to read would not in itself constitute a handicap, whereas in modern society such a disability makes normal adjustment almost impossible. Social change in the direction of greater complexity appears to have been extraordinarily rapid in recent years. Perhaps this fact explains why successive studies of the extent of feeble-mindedness have resulted in larger and larger estimates of the number.

In 1906 the British Royal Commission estimated that there were in Great Britain 4.61 per thousand mentally defective persons. In 1916 the New York survey for Nassau County gave the proportion in that area of the States as 5.44 per thousand. In 1929 the Joint Committee of the Board of Education and Board of Control, London, startled the community by raising the percentage to 8 per thousand for England and Wales, and formed the further opinion that for every child classified as feeble-minded, there were two or more children of only slightly higher mental and educational capacity.<sup>3</sup>

It is reasonable to suppose that the people of the United States are much like the English and that the demands of life in America are not greatly unlike those of England. If these assumptions are correct, an estimate of the number of feeble-minded persons in the United States would reach nearly a million, with at least two million borderline cases. A consensus of several conservative estimates, summed up by Davies, places the proportion of mental defectives in America at 4 per thousand.<sup>4</sup> Even at this proportion, the mental defectives constitute a large group, for the care of which great expenditures must be incurred. Most of the cost is borne by the families of the defectives and by almsgiving agencies not primarily engaged in the relief of the feeble-minded. Besides the admittedly defective, there are many millions of other persons in the American population not capable of adjusting themselves completely to the demands of modern society.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Berry, Richard J. and Gordon, R. G., *The Mental Defective*, p. 25. London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1931.

<sup>4</sup> *The Control of the Mentally Deficient*, 1930, p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> See East, E. M., *Hereditry and Human Affairs*, 1927, p. 236.

These persons are concentrated in the ranks of the unemployed and the unemployable. They are frequent beneficiaries of the free health clinics, legal aid services, government agencies, bread lines, in short, of the whole system of charities, public and private. Doubtless most of the persons receiving assistance owe their misfortunes to circumstance alone, but it seems also clear that in this group will be found a high proportion of individuals lacking in native capacity.

Only 111,884 patients were in the custody of State institutions reporting to the Census Bureau at the end of 1937, and these included 95.5 per cent of the total number of patients receiving institutional care in the United States. The ratio per 100,000 of the general population in State institutions for feeble-minded and epileptics at the beginning of 1938 was 72.1. The rates for selected previous years are: 1926, 47.8; 1927, 49.5; 1932, 61.6. The steady gain does not prove that there is an increase in feeble-mindedness; it merely reflects the increasing capacity of State institutions. Thus Massachusetts, well equipped to give institutional care, had a ratio of 156.3 per 100,000 of the general population in 1935, while Georgia had a rate of 8.3. The distribution of first admissions among the various classes during 1935 was as follows: morons, 47.4 per cent; imbeciles, 31.4 per cent; idiots, 18.4 per cent; unclassified, 2.9 per cent. Seventeen and nine tenths per cent of the admissions were epileptic in addition to being feeble-minded. The ratio for first admissions in State institutions in 1935 was 124 males to 100 females, a fact presumably accounted for by the more sheltered life of the latter. During 1935, the expenditures of State institutions for mental defectives and epileptics totaled \$22,515,197, an average per capita cost of \$252.22. The per capita cost in the several States ranged from \$77.65 in Washington to \$452.27 in Michigan.

#### CAUSES OF MENTAL DEFICIENCY

Very little is known of the nature of inherited feeble-mindedness, and consequently little can be said about it beyond the statement that it tends to pass from parent to child. Several

causes of nonhereditary mental defect have been identified. Myerson's classification of these causes contains five divisions, as follows:

1. Trauma at childbirth, causing hemorrhage in the meninges, brain injury, and often associated with hemiplegia, diplegia, etc. . . . The only possible heredity involved in such situations is the type of pelvis of the mother, or the overlarge head of the child. . . .

2. Infectious diseases of childhood, encephalitis, meningitis, often associated with hydrocephalus, cause feeble-mindedness, sometimes with epilepsy. . . .

3. Myxoedematous idiocy, cretinism. . . . As is well known, the essential cause is a disease of the thyroid gland, resulting in hypo-function of the gland, which in its turn leads to (a) stunted growth, to an extreme degree, (b) certain changes in face, hair, tongue, hands, etc. . . . (c) idiocy, usually of low grade.

4. Mongolian idiocy. . . . The mongolian idiot usually comes of a normal family, is rather often the last member of such a family, but aside from that, there is no general evidence of any abnormal heredity. . . .

5. There is also a group in which gross failure of brain development, or gross failure of the organs of sense, has brought about idiocy. . . . The fact that similar caricatures on life can be created by experimental toxic influences working in healthy eggs suggests strongly that something of this nature is responsible.<sup>6</sup>

It will readily be seen that certain socio-economic factors may be regarded as causes of some of the above-described types of mental defect. Women whose diet has been deficient in available calcium during their growing period are likely to have narrow pelvises. If their diet continues to be deficient, their children may become rachitic in the fetal stage and consequently have abnormally large heads at birth. These conditions increase the chances of birth injury with resultant feeble-mindedness of the individuals affected. Lack of iodine in the diet is associated with the malfunctioning of the thyroid gland, which causes cretinism. The absence of an effective system of control of infectious diseases, which naturally re-

<sup>6</sup>Myerson, A., *The Inheritance of Mental Diseases*, 1925, pp. 74-6, quoted by Davies, S. P., *Social Control of the Mental Deficient*, pp. 157-8. Baltimore: The Williams & Wilkins Company, 1930.

sults in the appearance of a large number of cases of such diseases, causes a proportionately large number of those types of feeble-mindedness due to infections.

#### PROBLEMS OF THE FEEBLEMINDED

In spite of much that society has done to mitigate the severity of the struggle for existence, it still goes on, and those who are severely handicapped by nature have scant chance of winning. For the feeble-minded, failure is practically assured from the beginning. Not only do they lack the physical stamina of normal persons, but they are also deficient in the more important means of adaptation, namely, intelligence. This deficiency places them at so great a disadvantage in economic competition that they find it difficult to hold even the less desirable jobs. Lack of the ability to acquire skill keeps them in the unskilled occupations, but even there they fail. Normally minded workers are usually more productive or, if not, they more readily hold their jobs by winning the personal favor of their employers. Capacity for economic productivity alone does not guarantee success. The feeble-minded know so little of their own rights and of how to secure them that they are easily cheated by normal persons who do not scruple to take advantage of their weaknesses. They know so little of their own welfare, both present and future, that they can neither save their earnings nor spend them wisely.

Unhappily the feeble-minded require a minimum of food, clothing, and shelter, without which they suffer just as do normal persons. Denied the means of gratifying these desires in the manner prescribed by society, they frequently resort to some form of theft as a substitute. Their lack of skill and wit prevents more than temporary success in crime, as in everything else they undertake. They are easily caught and convicted for their offenses. Our prisons contain many persons of low mentality whose criminal careers have been interrupted by conviction and imprisonment. After they have served their terms, they are released with no better equipment

for making a living than they had before they were sent to prison. They are therefore strongly tempted to repeat their illegal and futile attempts to adjust themselves to the world, and soon find themselves in prison again. Those members of this group who do not adopt crime as means of making a living are but slightly better off. Only when jobs are plentiful do they secure employment, and then only until their inefficiency is discovered. They are not only unemployed, but also unemployable. They make up a considerable proportion of the permanently idle, the shiftless, the ne'er-do-well, whose names appear over and over again on the records of the agencies of charity.

The difficulties of the feeble-minded are by no means limited to the economic sphere. They also face the problem of developing acceptable personalities and of building up and maintaining satisfactory relationships with other persons. Their low intelligence does not permit them to acquire the culture demanded by normal human beings of their associates. Incapacity to learn, to remember, and to assimilate and integrate experience is reflected in the stupidity of the mental defectives. Their small vocabulary prevents their taking more than a minor part in a conversation. In similar fashion, their inability to acquire the accepted degree and kind of emotional control prevents their entrance into normal groups. Their failure to develop a normal personality results in their isolation. Since they cannot respond in the manner expected of a companion, friend, or lover, these relations are denied them. Their personal attachments are necessarily on a low plane. Positions requiring exercise of tact, judgment, or finesse are not open to them. They are to a great extent shut out from normal life. They are not often sought as friends or companions. If they are near enough to normality to realize that they are excluded, they may resent the treatment accorded them, thinking they are victims of injustice. Here again lie the possibilities of criminal activity. It may be undertaken as a method of revenge or as a means of securing the attention of others. The interest shown by many criminals of low mentality in

the publicity given them strongly suggests that the desire for this publicity serves as a motive for their crimes.

The isolation forced upon the feeble-minded compels them to associate with each other. Naturally life in groups formed on the basis of common mental defect is conducted on a low level. Few of the amenities of life are observed. The standard of living sinks to the lowest level permitted by the normal portion of the community. Immorality, vice, and disease flourish.

#### TREATMENT

The concept of feeble-mindedness is of comparatively recent origin. Until little more than a century ago, it was not clearly differentiated from mental derangement or mental incapacity of any other kind. All were believed due to possession by evil spirits. Such care as charity bestowed upon unfortunates was given without discrimination to those who needed or demanded it. Early institutional care for the insane included the feeble-minded. Only after the beginning of the nineteenth century was any notice taken of them as a special group. The incident of the capture of the savage of Aveyron in 1798 and the subsequent attempt to educate him aroused considerable interest in mental defect. Since the "savage" was actually only a homeless, feeble-minded boy, he was never raised to normality, yet he was so much improved as to encourage his teacher, Itard, in the belief that the feeble-minded are only uncivilized, or undeveloped in mind through lack of experience and education. Itard's special methods of education, as well as his faith in their efficacy, were taken over by Edouard Seguin, who came to America in 1848. Seguin's activities inaugurated a period during which it was generally believed that the feeble-minded could be cured or, at least, so far improved as to be enabled to return to society. The first institutions, therefore, were intended to serve as schools rather than as custodial establishments. Gradually it came to be realized that mental defectives could not be cured. The schools filled up with pupils who could not learn, educational

efforts became exercises in futility, and the institutions were reduced to the status of asylums.

About 1870, it became known that cretinism could be relieved and prevented by supplying the iodine deficiency in the food consumed by the victims of the disease. Since feeble-mindedness is one of the more conspicuous symptoms of cretinism, the conclusion that all feeble-mindedness might be eliminated through modifications of the diet was widely accepted. A few experiments proved the new idea groundless and left the case of the feeble-minded as hopeless as ever.

### MENTAL TESTING

With the twentieth century came two developments destined to have far-reaching effects upon society's attitude toward and treatment of feeble-mindedness. These developments were mental testing and the science of genetics.<sup>7</sup> Alfred Binet, a Frenchman, wishing to find an objective method of determining mental defectiveness in children, devised a series of tests which would show the level of mental development reached by his patients in comparison with normal children. The tests were constructed with the intent to exclude the effects of different amounts of training and experience. The success of the Binet tests led to their adoption in America and to the beginning of an active mental testing movement. Thousands of tests have been contrived; almost every conceivable mental trait has been subjected to measurement. As is so often the case with new discoveries, the possibilities and values of mental testing were at first overrated. It was believed by the more enthusiastic exponents of mental testing that a well-administered test would give a perfect measurement of the mentality of the individual to whom it was applied, and that it would be possible on the basis of the results of a test to advise any person accurately as to his chances for success in school or in an occupation.

During the World War, mental tests were used extensively

<sup>7</sup> See Davies, S. P., *Social Control of the Mentally Deficient*, 1930, p. 48.

and successfully as a method of selecting men for training as officers. The larger number of men subjected to the tests and the representativeness of the sample gave to the psychologists a body of important data. From these data some investigators concluded that the average mentality of Americans is very low, that a large portion of the population, possibly one-fourth, is feeble-minded, that whites are more intelligent than Negroes, and that Northerners are more intelligent than Southerners. More recently we have come to appreciate the fact that, since the test is necessarily a sampling of mental content, it is impossible to escape the effects of individual differences in experience. Consequently comparisons between persons from different social environments are not valid. This is not to say that mental tests are of no value. When used properly, they may be of great service in the diagnosis of feeble-mindedness. Through the concept of the intelligence quotient (the ratio of the mental age to the chronological age), mental testing has given us a valuable measure of mental development and a more accurate understanding of the nature of mental defect.

#### GENETICS AND MENTAL DEFECT

The science of genetics had its origin with the rediscovery of Mendel's laws in 1900. It had been observed that feeble-mindedness tended to run in families, therefore the newly discovered principles of heredity were soon utilized as a means of explaining this tendency. Mental defect was assumed to be a simple Mendelian trait. C. B. Davenport, writing in 1910, held that if both parents are feeble-minded all their children will be feeble-minded.<sup>8</sup> Parents whose genetic constitutions are free from the taint of feeble-mindedness could not, under this theory, have mentally defective children, but since the trait in question is a recessive, it would be possible for persons who are themselves normal to transmit the trait to their offspring. Under these conditions it would be extremely difficult to eliminate feeble-mindedness through the application

<sup>8</sup> *Eugenics*, 1910, pp. 14-15.



of eugenics; nonetheless such a program at once suggested itself as a proper remedy.

Considerable impetus to this plan came from the belief that feeble-minded persons multiply more rapidly than the population at large. Several studies have indicated that parents of low mentality have larger families than normal parents. A little calculation will show that even with a slight differential in their favor the feeble-minded population will soon outnumber all the rest. The increasing numbers of such persons in colonies and asylums have lent plausibility to the conclusion. Clearly the most drastic method of preventing the multiplication of mental defectives would be justified. Further study, however, has shown that the fears of the early geneticists were somewhat exaggerated. In the first place, it has been demonstrated that the inheritance of feeble-mindedness is not so simple as at first supposed. It appears that there may be several different kinds of hereditary mental weakness, and a considerable amount which is not hereditary at all. Recent statements suggest that at least half the cases of mental deficiency are not inherited. In the second place, the danger of the rapid multiplication of the feeble-minded seems to have been inferred from a wrong interpretation of the evidence. Extremely defective individuals are obviously incapable of reproduction. Moreover, the large families sometimes observed among the feeble-minded could be explained by the fact that they are of low socio-economic status, to which feeble-mindedness is incidental.

#### REMEDIES—EDUCATION

As indicated in the introductory paragraphs of this chapter, feeble-mindedness was not recognized as a distinct form of defectiveness before the beginning of the nineteenth century. Naturally no special means of dealing with the problem could arise in advance of its recognition. Failure to understand the nature of mental defectiveness led at first to several plans for its elimination, the first of which was education. A school for the feeble-minded, the first of its kind in America, was

opened in South Boston, Massachusetts, in 1848.<sup>9</sup> As previously indicated, education failed as a method of curing feeble-mindedness. None of the other ways have proved entirely satisfactory, but all are now recognized as having some value in dealing with the problem. The modern method no longer depends upon any one approach but utilizes several, the choice being determined by the requirements of the individual case.

Although experience has shown that education cannot cure mental defect, it is nonetheless one of the chief means of combating its effects. Education is even more necessary for the feeble-minded than it is for the normal individual. The latter can learn much of what he needs to know by his own efforts; the former must be taught deliberately. Feeble-minded persons of moron grade can profit by academic training to a fairly high degree. They can learn to read and write well enough to meet all the ordinary demands of life. However, if they are required to attend school in the company of normal persons, they will become discouraged by their certain failure to measure up to the general standard. The special school of the institution, where the pupils are all backward, can set a slower pace and adapt its methods to the needs and capacities of the pupils. Expectations of achievement are within the range of low mentality; the satisfaction of an occasional triumph may be enjoyed even by the slow-witted.

The school forms an important part of the general social environment supplied by the institution. This environment, by providing opportunities and responsibilities suited to the capacities of the inmates, helps greatly to develop in them satisfactory emotional reactions, thereby preventing the rebelliousness, resentment, and surliness so often found in the feeble-minded individual from whom society has expected too much. The institutional inmate who can be returned to society is thus equipped with a pleasant rather than an unpleasant per-

<sup>9</sup> Raymond, C. Stanley, "State Institution Provision for Education of the Mentally Defective in the United States," *Bulletin of the Massachusetts Department of Mental Diseases*, Vol. XVI, Nos. 3 and 4, October, 1932, p. 22.

sonality, a disposition to conform to the demands of law and custom with a minimum of protest.

#### SEGREGATION

The separation of feeble-minded individuals from the normal population has much to recommend it. The public is thereby protected against the depredations of such mentally defective persons as might have become criminals if allowed to shift for themselves. If the segregation is carried to the point of separating the sexes, it serves as an effective method of preventing the feeble-minded from becoming parents. Regardless of the heritability of mental defect, this result is beneficial, for the children of feeble-minded parents, even if of normal mentality, will lack the kind of home environment necessary to the development of a socially acceptable personality.

Segregation also serves as a means of protection to the feeble-minded themselves. In the shelter of the institution they are free from exploitation at the hands of persons too shrewd for them. They are provided for without regard to their economic efficiency. In most cases, they are probably happier within the institution than outside it. Life there is simplified to meet their capacities, and the companionship of equals is available.

Against this method are heard arguments that it is expensive and that it is ineffective. Institutions are often costly to operate, and, apparently, there is practically no limit to the number of persons who should be institutionalized. States having large institutions for mental defectives have large populations of feeble-minded persons to care for. With respect to the ineffectiveness of segregation, it is maintained that its potentially good effects are lost through paroles, discharges, and escapes of the inmates. In spite of these objections, segregation has been accepted as one of the best methods of dealing with individuals who cannot learn to care for themselves well enough to remain at large. This group includes all idiots and imbeciles, and some morons.

The task of providing suitable institutions for housing the

feeble-minded has been undertaken by several States. Following the lead of Massachusetts and New York, the number of States making provision for mental defectives has steadily increased, especially during the more recent years. Some States have more than one institution. By 1935 the District of Columbia and all of the States except three had provided care for the feeble-minded.<sup>10</sup>

#### STERILIZATION

Some of the higher 'grade morons may be able to acquire several grades of schooling and the knowledge of a trade at which they may be able to make a satisfactory living outside the institution. For such individuals, sterilization has been recommended and used as a means of preventing them from having children. This method has grown in favor during recent years. The first sterilization law was passed in Indiana in 1907; in 1938 twenty-nine States had similar enactments. The New York law, passed in 1912, was declared unconstitutional in 1918. More recently, however, sterilization laws have proved acceptable to the courts, partly because they provide more satisfactorily for safeguarding the individual than did the earlier statutes, and partly because the courts have come to share the general approval of sterilization of certain types of mental defectives. Up to January 1, 1938, a total of 27,869 legal sterilization operations had been performed in the United States. Over 12,000 of these operations were performed in California.<sup>11</sup> Studies made by Paul Popenoe of a number of sterilized persons have shown that the operation has very little effect, if any, upon the sex life of the individual.<sup>12</sup> Many sterilized persons have married. They appear to succeed in married life as well as unsterilized persons. For the

<sup>10</sup> United States Bureau of the Census, *Mental Defectives and Epileptics in Institutions, 1935, 1937*.

<sup>11</sup> Human Betterment Foundation, *Human Sterilization Today* (pamphlet), no date.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Popenoe, Paul, "Effect of Vasectomy on the Sexual Life," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. XXIV, No. 3, October-November, 1929, pp. 251-68.

small groups of feeble-minded whose members can make a living for themselves and keep out of trouble outside the institution, but who are practically certain to fail as parents either because they will give their children poor heredity or because they cannot provide a proper social environment in their homes, sterilization promises to prove highly satisfactory.

#### THE WORKING COLONY

For the individual who is to become self-supporting, vocational training is the necessary complement of academic and emotional education. In general, institutions for mental defectives do not have adequate means for giving such training and, consequently, are not able to utilize the potential powers of their inmates. The success of the colony system shows what can be done in this respect. Begun in 1893 in Indiana, it has had its greatest development in New York and Massachusetts. Several farms are operated by groups of feeble-minded boys under the supervision of resident farmers who direct not only the work of the boys but their leisure activities as well. For the girls, colonies have been established in towns where employment is to be had in stores, households, or factories. The colony serves as a home for the girls of the group. Jobs suited to their abilities and free from moral hazard are found for the girls by the manager of the colony. Most of these colonies have proved highly successful. Not only do they add materially to the happiness of their inmates; they also greatly reduce the cost of care for the feeble-minded.

#### PAROLE

Some of the inmates of institutions become fitted, after a period of training, to live outside the institution under slight supervision. These individuals are provided for in some States by a parole system. Ordinarily some interested person, such as a parent or employer, acts as guardian over the paroled inmate. A social worker from the institution exercises control on part of the State by means of periodic visits. This

plan, like the colony, lowers the cost of caring for the mental defectives.

### THE DEFECTIVE DELINQUENT

Some members of the feeble-minded group, in most cases as the result of poor training, are so antisocial in their behavior that they cannot be adjusted to the routine of ordinary institutional life. Naturally they cannot be placed in working colonies, nor can they be paroled. Their dangerousness and destructiveness make them a menace to the institution. Many not in institutions are not discovered to be feeble-minded until after they have committed serious crimes for which they have been sentenced to prison. The majority of such persons serve their sentences along with the convicts of normal mentality. For this class a special institution seems desirable. However, only three States—New York, Massachusetts, and Virginia—have as yet provided facilities to care for defective delinquents.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Davies, S. P., *Social Control of the Mentally Deficient*, 1930, pp. 132-45.

## THE CONQUEST OF DISEASE

IT IS impossible to overestimate the value of good health to the individual. No matter how high his ambition and his ability, he cannot hope to accomplish much if he is ill a great part of the time. The conditions of modern life require him to work regularly, often at tasks demanding strength, endurance, and accuracy. A sick man cannot meet these demands. He cannot keep up with his fellow workers. He loses income when he is too ill to work, and while working is less productive than the healthy individual. The consequent low productivity makes for low pay, if not the loss of employment altogether. At the same time, illness entails heavy expense in the form of doctor bills, nursing, and medicines; and, if the illness ends with the death of the worker before he has reached old age, the loss of his earning power must be borne by his dependents. Other losses, less easily stated in economic terms, frequently accompany illness. A close relationship exists between the possession of good health and the development of a desirable personality. The man who suffers physical pain cannot easily remain cheerful and happy. Instead he becomes grouchy, morose, and irritable. He has disagreements with his family and friends, which may be so serious as to prevent his maintaining normal social relations. In extreme cases, illness may disturb the individual's mental balance so far as to cause him to commit crimes or other antisocial acts.

## SOCIETY'S STAKE IN HEALTH

Good health is no less important to the group as a whole than it is to the individual. A nation made up largely of invalids is not likely to be successful in many of its undertakings. Sick citizens are not co-operative, aggressive, or capable. They cannot supply soldiers for the defense of the group; they can-

not keep pace with the social change of the world. A nation of invalids easily falls prey to healthy conquerors, who force upon its citizens the ignominy of a defeated and inferior class.

Of more immediate importance, perhaps, is the relationship between illness and dependency. While it can scarcely be maintained that one of these conditions causes the other, it is nonetheless apparent that they are mutually aggravating. A low income makes adequate medical care too costly to secure and thus increases the seriousness of illness. On the other hand, illness reduces the earning power of the worker, soon throwing him and his family into dependency. Almost all kinds of disease are, therefore, more frequent in the lower economic groups. Mortality rates in the lowest income groups have been reported to be twice as high as among people of adequate means. Of those families which in normal times of the past have applied for charity, about three fourths have had difficult health problems, often involving two or more members. Here, of course, the social interest is clearly indicated. Any plan for the rehabilitation of dependents suffering from illness must first be directed toward the restoration of their health.

#### ILLNESS IN HISTORY

There is considerable evidence for the view that disease has profoundly affected the course of civilization through the historic period. The decay of Greece and of Rome, following achievements in civilization unsurpassed in their time, can hardly be explained without assuming the appearance of some factor adversely influencing the vitality of the people. Some observers have contended that this factor was a disease, possibly malaria. Whether or not such an explanation is valid in a particular case, there can be no question but that disease has been of serious consequence to the human race. Until well within the nineteenth century, life in the city was attended by chances of illness and death which, from our point of view, were appalling. City populations were recruited largely from the rural regions surrounding them and were, consequently, subjected to a continuous "ruralization," which hindered the



development of a social life especially suited to a dense population. Only extraordinary epidemics, the like of which are almost unknown at present, aroused them to precaution or flight. They were adjusted to prevailing conditions through an attitude of resignation.

This resignation to human suffering and loss of life, so hard for us to appreciate in these days, may be considered a product of the conditions under which the people of former times had to live. A person as sensitive as the average city dweller of today could scarcely have survived in a European city of three or four centuries ago. If his sympathies were not so harried as to drive him mad, he would probably have perished from fear. The state of the public mind, thus generated by the insecurity of existence, reacted upon human relations in numerous ways. People laughed at the struggles of the cripple, the stupidities of the imbecile, and the ravings of the lunatic. The sufferings of the poor excited but little pity. The public enjoyed the spectacle of a convict tortured for his offenses. So callous were the feelings of the time that mere imprisonment was not regarded as punishment, because it did not inflict pain.

The great change which has taken place in the last two centuries has been attributed to the acceptance of the ideas of the brotherhood of man as presented in religious teachings. Although these ideas undoubtedly have had much influence, it is quite possible that the reduction of morbidity and mortality, following the application of scientific discoveries to the saving of life, has in itself resulted in a higher evaluation of the individual human being. We now look upon life as relatively secure, both for ourselves and for others, and make our plans upon that assumption. When these plans are interrupted by the death of one of our associates, our sense of loss is overwhelming. The very security of life may therefore serve as the means of stimulating our efforts to make it even more secure.

#### SCIENCE AND HEALTH

The factor which has made possible the control of disease among civilized peoples is the accumulation of scientific knowl-

edge. But for the facts we have discovered regarding the needs of the human organism and the nature of disease, both treatment and prevention would be still unrealized. The futile attempts of primitive peoples to protect themselves by means of magic demonstrate conclusively the value of positive knowledge. Folklore of the past, however, clings to us tenaciously. The suspicion with which human beings approach innovations of every sort has interfered with the progress of medicine at many points. The members of society are usually well adjusted to the state of scientific and other knowledge which has been in existence for some time. The appearance of new elements, often in contradiction to some parts of the old system, requires painful readjustment. The persons most affected are likely to object most strenuously to the new element. In many instances they have succeeded not only in preventing the spread of scientific knowledge, but also in stopping scientific investigation. There is no way of knowing to what extent the conservative and anti-scientific attitude may have turned to other pursuits able men who might have made important scientific contributions.

It is obvious, therefore, that science, although the product of individual effort in a certain sense, is dependent upon the state of social attitudes for encouragement and even for permission to proceed. Most men of ability turn their talents to those activities in which success is rewarded by social approval. Fortunately a few have risked the dangers of nonconformity and given science a beginning. With the demonstration of its value, much of the opposition has disappeared. We have now gone so far as to appropriate large sums of money for purely experimental purposes, and we have added eminent scientists to our list of minor heroes. As compared with the past of two or three hundred years ago, scientific investigation has an extremely favorable milieu. Yet extensive research remains to be done before we may permit a lessening of efforts in this field. Not only is there much to be learned about disease; we need also to study the relation of medicine to the rest of our culture, to the end that its benefits may be more widely distributed.

It is perhaps with regard to this latter problem that the need is most pressing, for we have already accumulated more knowledge of the prevention and cure of illness than we have been able to utilize effectively.

It is the discrepancy between the state of scientific knowledge and its application to the cure and prevention of disease that makes the maintenance of health a social rather than an individual problem. Every individual is concerned about his health as a matter of course. He will care for it in accordance with his notions of the proper means and his ability to avail himself of them. His notions of the proper means are not of his own devising. He learns them from schools, associates, books, and magazines. If the information he thus acquires is wrong, his illness is chargeable to the group, which, having the correct information, has failed to make it available to the individual members. A similar responsibility rests with the group for enabling the individual to secure the materials and services necessary for the maintenance of health. Although we recognize the general importance of health, we have to a large degree entrusted the development of the methods of caring for it to private enterprise interested primarily in pecuniary gain. The result is that many individuals are unable, by reason of low income, to buy the treatments or preventives which they need. The welfare of society demands that public health be safeguarded even if the costs must be borne by the public treasury. The conflict ensuing between social and private interests is a difficult phase of the public health problem.

#### THE GERM THEORY OF DISEASE

Society's concern in the control of disease has manifested itself for centuries. In every grade of culture are found practices designed to cure or prevent illness. However, as long as these practices were based upon the belief that illness was due to bad air, evil spirits, or witchcraft, they were of little avail. Only in a few instances was the contagious nature of certain diseases observed and the victims isolated to good effect; really successful curative and preventive measures date from the de-

velopment of the germ theory of disease. That disease might be caused by micro-organisms was inferred before it could be proved. A good deal of knowledge concerning the habits of micro-organisms had already been gained when in 1863 Davaine demonstrated that a certain bacillus causes anthrax.<sup>1</sup> This discovery led to further investigation, with the result that we now know the organisms responsible for a score or more of diseases. Since a disease in this class does not occur in the absence of the specific organism associated with it, a method of preventing disease at once suggests itself, namely, an attack upon the organism. This attack may take varied forms, depending upon the life habits of the organism involved. To succeed, the attack must be undertaken by society; the individual ordinarily lacks the necessary resources.

#### EXTENT OF ILLNESS

It appears that, as compared with almost any period of the past, the health of modern civilized peoples is much improved. Yet there is still, as shown by numerous studies,<sup>2</sup> a great deal of illness among us. Each person in the United States is too ill to work or to attend school at least once a year, the chances being about even that his illness is a cold or other respiratory ailment. The time lost from work or school ranges from seven to ten days per year per person, not counting the lowered efficiency of those who are ill but not ill enough to be kept away from their ordinary occupations, nor the loss of time by those whose illnesses have permanently incapacitated them. In the aggregate, the amount of time lost runs into millions of days annually.

#### TUBERCULOSIS

Since ancient times, tuberculosis has been recognized as one of the most common and most serious of diseases. Though formerly much more prevalent than at present, it still afflicts some 600,000 people in the United States and causes more than 65,000

<sup>1</sup> Bolduan, Charles Frederick, *Public Health and Hygiene*, 1930, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> See the publications of The Committee on the Costs of Medical Care.

deaths per year. The long invalidism caused by the disease makes it extremely objectionable from a purely economic standpoint.

The cause of tuberculosis was discovered by Koch in 1882 in the tubercle bacillus, which he found always present in tubercular lesions. He noted, however, that the presence of the bacilli in the body of an individual does not inevitably result in the appearance of the disease. A degree of immunity is possessed by some persons and may be developed in others. Unless exposed to the attack of a large number of germs, the healthy individual ordinarily escapes serious infection.

Any condition which lowers the general vitality, and particularly conditions affecting the lungs, predisposes the individual to tuberculosis. The disease is, therefore, most common among those who suffer from undernourishment, fatigue, or the effects of a dust-laden atmosphere—conditions most likely to be encountered by unskilled workers. So close is the correlation between tuberculosis and income that it may be properly described as a disease of the lower classes. This fact has been a great hindrance to the successful treatment of the disease, inasmuch as the poverty which originally reduced the patient's vitality prevents his recovering it again. Complete rest, good food, and freedom from worry are essential to building up the individual's strength. Since he cannot possibly supply these for himself, it follows that the treatment of tuberculosis must be paid for by society at large.

A strong social movement to combat tuberculosis has been under way since about 1890. The result has been highly satisfactory, the death rate from tuberculosis having fallen to about one third of what it was thirty years ago. There are now over 700 institutions in the United States treating tuberculars, with a total capacity of 93,000 patients. These are fairly well distributed throughout the land according to need as measured by deaths from tuberculosis, except in the South. Since the incidence of death from tuberculosis among Negroes is about four times as high as among whites, and since fewer beds are

provided for Negroes than for whites, it is evident that the lack of hospital facilities for tuberculosis in the South is felt chiefly by the colored population.

### PNEUMONIA

Pneumonia is the name given to a group of infectious diseases characterized by inflammation of the lungs, fever, and delirium. The mortality is high, sometimes reaching fifty per cent. As in the case of tuberculosis, the germs are widespread in their distribution, being often found in the respiratory passages of healthy persons. The disease frequently follows a lowering of resistance caused by prolonged exposure, extreme fatigue, or other diseases, such as influenza or measles.

Although recently developed methods of treatment have proved highly successful, efforts to control pneumonia must be directed mainly toward preventing the spread of infection. To this end, some health departments prescribe isolation of the patient and careful disposal of the discharges from his mouth and throat. The public should be instructed to avoid unnecessary contact with patients and to maintain a high state of bodily vigor for the purpose of resisting infection. An attack does not confer immunity upon the individual, nor has any satisfactory method of artificial immunization been discovered. However, the application of what we have learned about pneumonia has given favorable results. The death rate from pneumonia is now only about 80 per 100,000 population, but even at this rate the annual death toll is about 110,000.

### DIPHTHERIA

Formerly a very common children's disease, with a high death rate, diphtheria now furnishes a prime example of the successful application of the discoveries of science by the agencies of society to the problem of health. Through the administration of toxin-antitoxin, immunity can be developed in the individual which probably lasts through life. The presence or absence of immunity can be determined by the Schick test, and

in the case of persons who have contracted the disease, treatment with antitoxin greatly facilitates recovery. The death rate from diphtheria is now only one-seventh of the rate twenty-five years ago. The number of deaths in 1937 was 2,637.

#### SCARLET FEVER

Like diphtheria, scarlet fever is a children's disease formerly so prevalent that the majority of all children contracted it. The disease tends to run in epidemics of varying severity, the mortality sometimes reaching twenty per cent. A toxin is used in the Dick test to determine immunity of individuals. Antitoxin has been used with good results in treatment. Along with these valuable discoveries, it has also been found that the infection may be carried by persons who show no symptoms of the disease and, hence, cannot be recognized as sources of danger. Although the death rate from scarlet fever has been decreasing over a long period, due possibly to the enforcement of quarantine regulations and a heightened resistance on part of the population at large, the main problem of its elimination is as yet unsolved. Over 200,000 cases, with 1,824 deaths, were reported in 1937.

#### INFLUENZA AND COLDS

The epidemic character and the swift spread of influenza and common colds, together with their universality, place them among the most serious illnesses, in spite of their ordinarily low mortality rates. The cases of influenza serious enough to be reported numbered nearly a half million in 1937. We know little about these diseases beyond the fact that they are infectious and that those afflicted spread the disease. Since most of the victims are not ill enough to be confined to their beds, they constitute a menace to the health of the whole community within which they move. The close contacts of theater, street car, and shopping crowd inevitably expose nearly every person to the danger of infection. Public education has begun to bear some fruit in making people more careful, but we still have far to go before we shall be able to control these diseases.

## TYPHOID FEVER

The typhoid bacillus was discovered by several investigators in 1880. From subsequent studies we have gained virtually a complete understanding of the etiology of typhoid fever. We know that practically every case of typhoid fever is caused by the ingestion of bacilli which came originally from the fecal discharges of a person afflicted with the disease. Human wastes containing typhoid bacilli, not properly disposed of, may find their way into the water supply, thus exposing to infection all who drink from it. Flies or unwashed hands may contaminate milk or other food with the germs. Ordinarily the body of a person who recovers from the disease ultimately frees itself from the bacilli, but occasionally they remain for years after all other symptoms of the disease have disappeared. Persons who harbor germs in this fashion are called typhoid carriers. Because they often escape detection, they may be unwittingly the source of a great deal of infection in handling food. A typhoid vaccine, conferring immunity lasting several years, has been developed as a means of protection to soldiers, travelers, and others who are obliged to take unusual risks of infection.

The practically complete knowledge we possess concerning the manner in which typhoid fever is spread should enable us to eliminate it completely. If every case could be rigorously segregated, new cases would not develop. Epidemics could be stopped before they begin; only sporadic cases would appear. That we still have between two and three thousand deaths annually from typhoid fever in the United States indicates the imperfect state of our social organization. We are not able to co-operate sufficiently to act for our own unquestioned welfare, even though the course of action is clear.

## YELLOW FEVER, MALARIA, AND DENGUE

Yellow fever, malaria, and dengue are treated together because, being all conveyed to man by the bites of insects, they yield to similar methods of control. These insects, a particular variety of mosquito for each disease, are themselves first in-



fected from the blood of diseased persons. After a period of incubation, the causal organism may be injected into a human body by the infected mosquito. The life cycle of the causal organism requires that it alternate between its hosts, the mosquito and man.

Yellow fever was formerly endemic in all the warmer coastal cities of America, sometimes occurring as far north as Philadelphia and as far inland as Memphis. The high mortality of yellow fever has caused it to be greatly feared. Fortunately the breeding habits of the mosquito which carries the infection are such as easily to permit its eradication. The last serious outbreak of the disease in the United States occurred in New Orleans more than thirty years ago. The problem of control now consists merely in preventing the introduction of the disease through the seaports by persons coming on vessels from areas where yellow fever is still found.

Malaria has been feared less than yellow fever, because the illness it causes is not entirely disabling as a rule and the mortality rate is low. Because of the multitude of its victims, however, it has doubtless caused much more loss and suffering than any other comparable disease. Malaria was formerly present in swampy regions all over the United States. The warmer climate of the South extended the season in this area, some portions being all but uninhabitable in consequence. The application of modern methods of control has eliminated malaria from the northern portions of America and greatly reduced its prevalence in the South. There is still, however, much malaria in the United States. The number of deaths is small, about four thousand per year, but the weakness induced in the victims who survive makes them susceptible to other diseases, thereby indirectly shortening their lives.

The control of malaria is theoretically quite simple. In the first place, all malarial patients should be kept in screened enclosures so that no mosquitoes may bite them and become infected. Second, healthy persons should avoid mosquito bites by protecting themselves, especially during the twilight hours

when the mosquitoes are most likely to be abroad. Third, the breeding of mosquitoes should be prevented by draining swamps, by stocking ponds with minnows, or by depositing a film of oil on standing water where the mosquito eggs are likely to be hatched. Fourth, malarial patients should take quinine, which is a specific remedy for the disease. In practice, it is not easy to carry out all of these measures adequately. Here again we observe society's inability to meet the needs of its members. Nonetheless, progress has been made, and it may safely be predicted that in the course of a few generations malaria will be almost as rare in the United States as yellow fever.

Dengue resembles malaria in many respects. It is carried by mosquitoes in the same way. It occurs throughout the same range as malaria, but is much less common. The prevention of malaria through the destruction of the breeding places of malaria-carrying mosquitoes will probably serve to prevent dengue as well.

### HOOKWORM

Most of the diseases considered display a pronounced tendency to afflict the lower economic groups somewhat more frequently than the higher. None, however, is more distinctly a disease of the lower classes than hookworm. It is found in all the warmer areas of the earth, and in the temperate zones it is occasionally found in mines. Many millions of persons are afflicted with hookworm. According to Stiles,<sup>3</sup> there are two million victims of the disease in the United States.

The New World hookworm, discovered by Stiles in 1902, is a worm measuring a little more than a half inch in length, which attaches itself to the lining of the intestine, where it lives on the blood and tissues of the host. The eggs of the hookworm leave the body with the fecal discharges and hatch as soon as they receive a supply of oxygen from the air. After hatching they

<sup>3</sup> Bolduan, Charles Frederick, *Public Health and Hygiene*, 1930, p. 149.

may live for months in soft, moist earth. Human beings, walking barefoot, soil their feet with earth containing the parasites, which burrow through the skin of the feet into the lymphatics. Carried by the lymphatics to the thoracic duct, they enter the blood stream and follow it to the lungs. They then burrow into the smaller air passages and are ultimately coughed up and swallowed. They thus reach the small intestine where they attach themselves and grow to maturity.

The chief symptom of the disease is anemia. Accompanying this is likely to be a general listlessness and weakness. Hookworm victims are lazy, shiftless, and unambitious. When children are attacked by the disease, both physical and mental development are delayed, sometimes permanently. One of the worst features of hookworm is the fact that its victims become so apathetic as to lose interest in their own welfare.

The disease is easily cured. Half a dozen different drugs have been used successfully. In view of this and of the fact that the cause of the disease is now well known, it would appear that the complete elimination of hookworm would be simple and easy, but here as in many other social problems the inertia of ignorance and the handicap of poverty delays the application of preventive measures. The mere demonstration of the economic loss caused by the disease is not sufficient. A long course of patient education will be required before the afflicted groups can be lifted to a plane sufficiently high to enable them to co-operate with public health agencies to their own benefit.

#### INFANTILE PARALYSIS (POLIOMYELITIS)

Infantile paralysis, so called because its victims are nearly always children and because paralysis is the most conspicuous symptom, usually occurs in epidemics during warm weather. The manner in which the infection is spread has not been definitely determined, nor has a causal organism been identified. Beyond taking general precautions to isolate the patients, little can be done to prevent the spread of this disease. At present a great deal of research is devoted to infantile paralysis, which, it is hoped, will yield significant results for the future.

## CEREBROSPINAL MENINGITIS

Epidemic cerebrospinal meningitis is characterized by inflammation of the linings or meninges of the brain and spinal cord. It is caused by a micro-organism discovered by Weichselbaum in 1887 and named the meningococcus. The infection is probably spread by the nasal discharges of those afflicted, but it may also be distributed by healthy persons who carry the germ without themselves becoming diseased. The mortality of meningitis has been high in the past. Since the utilization of a serum treatment, the number of deaths has been slightly reduced. Isolation of the patients is the only means of prevention developed thus far.

## HYDROPHOBIA

Although the total number of cases of hydrophobia occurring annually in the United States is small, the disease is mentioned here as an example of a neglected opportunity on the part of society to use to advantage the information of scientific discovery. Hydrophobia is found chiefly in the lower animals, among which it is transmitted by the bites of those attacked. Among human beings, the disease is most frequently caused by the bites of rabid dogs but is occasionally transmitted by cats, rats, or squirrels. Unless treated promptly, the disease invariably brings horrible suffering and death.

A period of several weeks elapses between the time of the infection and the appearance of the symptoms of the disease. In treatment this interval is utilized to build up in the infected individual an immunity which will counteract the effects of the disease later. In order to make the treatment quickly available to anyone who may need it, Pasteur Institutes have been established in numerous parts of the country. These agencies are equipped to diagnose rabies in animals and to administer injections of attenuated virus to persons who have been exposed to infection. Of the large number of persons who receive treatment, many would doubtless have escaped the disease even if not treated but have had to undergo the treatment as a precau-

tionary measure. Many lives have been saved through the Pasteur Institutes, but it is to be regretted that they have so many cases to treat. The treatment is both expensive and painful. If adequate preventive measures were taken, most of this work and suffering would be unnecessary. Such preventive measures would include the immunization of all dogs, or, at least, the muzzling of all dogs kept in cities, and the systematic capture and disposition of stray dogs wherever found. European experience has shown the effectiveness of such procedure. Our own inability to co-operate requires us to expend the pound of cure instead of the ounce of prevention.

#### SMALLPOX

Long before micro-organisms were known to be the cause of disease, a method of prevention of one of the worst diseases known to man was discovered. In a time when one fifth of the children born in England died of smallpox before reaching the age of ten, and practically everyone in the population had smallpox at some time or other during his life, Dr. Edward Jenner observed that milkmaids often escaped the disease. He shrewdly guessed that the minor disease, cowpox, to which milkmaids were exposed, made them immune to smallpox. In 1798 Dr. Jenner introduced the practice of vaccination, that is, of inoculating persons with the virus of cowpox. The success of the practice led to its general adoption. In most civilized countries, vaccination is free and compulsory for every citizen. Consequently in such countries smallpox is extremely rare. In this country the lack of systematic vaccination gives opportunity for the development of epidemics, some of which reach alarming proportions. In 1937, no fewer than 11,673 cases were reported.

#### VENEREAL DISEASES

The two chief venereal diseases, syphilis and gonorrhea, are caused by specific organisms usually transmitted in sexual relations. The seriousness of these diseases has only recently come

to be recognized. Both are chronic in character, likely to remain long after the primary symptoms have disappeared, and bring after them an extended train of evils. Modern methods of diagnosis have made possible the accurate and early recognition of venereal diseases. Cures can usually be accomplished if expert treatment is sought during the early stages. A great difficulty encountered is the reluctance of many persons to admit that they have contracted an infection of this kind. They therefore neglect their illness altogether, attempt to treat themselves, or go to quack doctors who promise quick and secret cures. Laws requiring the reporting of venereal diseases to the health authorities, the establishment of clinics giving free treatment, and education of the public regarding the true nature of these diseases have done something to reduce their frequency. They are still, however, a common affliction. According to figures compiled by the United States Public Health Service, about twelve per cent of the population suffers from venereal disease. Only a relatively small portion of the total receive medical attention—493,000 gonorrhea patients and 683,000 syphilitics. Because of its numerous deadly aftereffects, syphilis is generally regarded as the more serious of the two diseases. Half its victims are infected between the ages of twenty and thirty. Men are infected one and a half times as frequently as women; Negroes six times as frequently as whites; urban dwellers four times as frequently as rural dwellers. It is estimated that 60,000 babies are born with congenital syphilis each year in the United States.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Thomas Parran considers it probable that if all conditions due to syphilis were correctly reported, it alone would be found to be the leading cause of death in this country.<sup>5</sup> A campaign is now in progress, supported in part by public funds, to stamp out syphilis. That it can be done has been demonstrated in the Scandinavian countries, where the disease has become a rarity. It is to be hoped that the campaign will receive the encouragement it de-

<sup>4</sup> See Parran, Thomas, *Shadow on the Land*, 1937.

<sup>5</sup> "The Next Great Plague to Go," *Survey Graphic*, Vol. XXV, No. 7, July, 1936, pp. 405-11, 442-3.

serves, to the end that one major source of ill health and untimely death may be finally stopped.

### DIETARY DEFICIENCIES

By far the larger number of the diseases which are social problems, in that they require social action for their control, are infectious. Certain diseases, however, resulting from dietary deficiencies can be prevented only through the efforts of the community as a whole. With the specialization of food production and the increasing urbanization of the population, many persons have been forced to accept a diet lacking in some of the essential elements. Sometimes a poor diet is chosen because it is cheaper, though often the choice is made through ignorance of real food values. It is only recently that the complexity of our food needs has been recognized, and people in general do not know what scientific research has discovered in this field. The prevention of such diseases as scurvy, beriberi, pellagra, and rickets depends for success upon a process of education which will inform every householder in the land of the food requirements of the human body.

### CANCER, HEART DISEASE, AND DIABETES

The increasing death rate from cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and other degenerative diseases makes them of special interest to humanity. They have increased in frequency until they figure as causes in nearly half the deaths now occurring in the United States. Although a considerable portion of the increase is undoubtedly due to the advance in the general age level of the population, this is not the only factor. If not checked, these diseases may assume the proportions of a medieval epidemic. Some advance has been made in methods of treatment and in making these methods more generally available, as, for example, in Massachusetts, but no adequate means of prevention have been developed. In order that such means may be discovered, it is necessary that society do everything in its power to encourage able men to do research in this field.

## DISEASES OF INFANCY AND MATERNITY

The number of stillbirths and the death rates of infants under one year and of mothers in childbirth constitute widely accepted indexes of the state of the public health. Unhappily, by these measures the United States does not rank as high as could be desired. The annual number of stillbirths is about 75,000. The infant death rate has been reduced by fifty per cent in the past hundred years; with proper attention, it could be reduced still further. Several European countries have rates below 50, whereas the United States rate for 1937 was 54.4. Considerable variability is shown by the several regions, ranging from 46 in New England to 75.5 in the Mountain States. The differences correlate closely with differences in general income levels and standards of living of the population. Among the Negroes, for example, the infant death rate is much higher than among the whites.

Maternal mortality in America, like infant mortality, is higher than in many foreign countries. (See table.) In 1935, a total of 12,544 women died in the United States from illnesses associated with childbirth. Many of these deaths could have been prevented if proper medical and nursing care had been available. Here again the handicap of low income is evident as a condition tending to cause illness.

DEATHS OF MOTHERS PER 10,000 LIVE BIRTHS FOR  
SELECTED COUNTRIES IN 1931<sup>6</sup>

United States .....	66.1	Netherlands .....	32.0
Scotland .....	59.1	Italy .....	27.8
Australia .....	54.8	Norway .....	27.0
Canada .....	50.5	France .....	24.9
England and Wales .....	41.1	Chile .....	75.0

## SOCIAL ATTITUDES AND THE CONTROL OF DISEASE

It has been suggested in the preceding pages that the inertia of ignorance constitutes one of the greatest difficulties encountered by preventive medicine. As a general statement, this is

<sup>6</sup> Brown, Esther Lucile, *Physicians and Medical Care*, p. 40. New York: The Russell Sage Foundation, 1937.



undoubtedly true. Unfortunately there are, in addition to the passive resistance of ignorance, a number of attitudes toward preventive practices which manifest themselves in active opposition. Among these may be mentioned the superstitious regard for the efficacy of charms and incantations. More discouraging still are the objections of groups of persons, otherwise educated and intelligent, to the well-established practices of medical science. Few facts can be more thoroughly demonstrated than the value of vaccination as a preventive of smallpox or of quinine as a treatment for malaria. Yet in some cases organizations have been formed for the sole purpose of opposing these and similar practices. The success of such organizations in weakening the support of the public for health legislation has doubtless contributed numerous to the death list in the United States.

#### NOSTRUMS AND PATENT MEDICINES

The same attitudinal complex which makes people suspicious of scientific practices makes them the ready dupes of quackery. The shelves of American drug stores are filled with nostrums of every description, guaranteed, by implication at least, to heal every imaginable and imaginary human ill. Advertising in magazines and over the radio sets forth the virtues of this remedy or that with fear-inspiring predictions for those who fail to "get a bottle today." Millions of dollars are spent yearly by the people of the United States on worthless medicines. The few available medicines of tested value are often given fancy trade names and sold at exorbitant prices.

Related in its effect upon health to the medicine business is the indiscriminate sale of harmful cosmetics and adulterated or spoiled foods. Since only a small number of inspectors are engaged by the Food and Drug Administration to look for foods and drugs not complying with legal standards, it is probable that, although a good many violations are discovered, still more escape detection. This is particularly likely in the case of articles the use of which does not immediately result in illness or death.

It may be pointed out also that American laws are extremely lax in the regulation of foods and drugs, but particularly so with regard to cosmetics. A large part of the huge sum spent by the women of this country for cosmetics is wasted, because the product is useless for the purpose claimed or because, less often, it does bodily harm to the user. The magnitude of the industry which caters to the demand for beauty and health has enabled it to resist successfully numerous attempts to pass laws which would protect the consuming public. This resistance is in itself proof that regulation is necessary. If no manufacturers produced impure or worthless materials, they could not reasonably object to laws prohibiting such manufacture.

#### UNORTHODOX HEALING AND QUACKERY

Besides the regular members of the medical profession, there are in the United States about 36,000 persons engaged in treating illness. The amount spent on treatments administered by this group has been estimated at \$125,000,000 per year.<sup>7</sup> Most of these healers have little training in medical science; a few have none at all. Some of them pretend to possess occult powers; they utilize unorthodox methods of diagnosis and promise cures to the hopelessly afflicted. Strange theories of disease, greatly varying from those which underlie the great progress of medicine, lead to strange practices, the very strangeness of which seems to make them so much the more acceptable. The believers of each particular theory are usually organized, sometimes quite definitely, into cults. They gather strength from each other and defend their beliefs with all the ardor of the religious crusader. In extreme cases, the propositions of ordinary logic have no appeal; minds are closed to all evidence unfavorable to the particular cause.

As they become older and better established, the unorthodox tend gradually to accept more and more of generally accepted practice in the art of healing. To the extent that they approach the standards of the medical profession, they are of course capable of giving valuable service. Even the best of them, however,

<sup>7</sup> See Reed, Louis Schultz, *The Healing Cults*, 1932.

are not so well trained for their work as the graduates of the better medical schools.

The problem of licensing the unorthodox healer has yet to be satisfactorily solved. Obviously, the standards of the medical profession cannot be applied to him without considerable modification, yet the right of the public to protection must not be forgotten. One possible solution is to require that all candidates for licenses to treat illness, regardless of the theories they hold, possess a good general education in the basic sciences. Under this safeguard, at least the worst and most ignorant of the quacks could be detected and eliminated.

#### PROVISIONS FOR THE CARE OF THE SICK

Society has adjusted itself to the problem of dealing with illness by maintaining an extensive system of schools, hospitals, and sanitariums; through special occupations, such as physicians, nurses, and pharmacists; and by means of economic devices, such as loans, insurance, and benefit associations. The core of this organization is the physician or medical practitioner, who as a rule is expected, first, to diagnose the illness of the patient and, second, to prescribe a course of treatment. Equally important is that phase of the physician's work through which illness is prevented instead of cured, but the extensive application of prevention awaits a degree of social co-operation as yet unattained. For a long time to come, it seems likely that our first attention to health will appear only after it is threatened by illness. The availability of skilled practitioners is therefore of prime importance.

To meet this need in the United States are about 142,000 physicians, or one to each 800 persons in the population. While undoubtedly the average ability of physicians has steadily improved during the past several decades, the number of physicians in relation to the population has declined considerably. The reduction in numbers is probably a by-product of the persistent drive for higher standards in medical education, which has placed such education, on account of the expense and time involved, beyond the reach of many who might otherwise have

undertaken to secure it. Also involved, no doubt, is a certain amount of pressure from the physicians as a group to limit the number of new competitors in the field. Perhaps the number of physicians would be large enough to render all the required service, if they were properly distributed throughout the land with reference to the population. In actuality, they are quite unequally distributed and are becoming more so. Village communities and rural areas have less than one-third as many physicians per unit of population as do the larger cities. Recent graduates of medical schools tend to establish themselves in the larger places. It is apparent that physicians are not distributed according to need, but according to the ability of the people to pay for medical services. In the centers of population, where wealth is concentrated, physicians are numerous; where the people are poor, physicians are few.

Besides the physicians there are available for health service to the people of the United States the following groups, of approximately the numbers given: 62,000 dentists, 20,000 optometrists, 200,000 graduate nurses and an equal number of practical nurses, 130,000 pharmacists, 47,000 midwives, and 450,000 others, including lay workers in institutions. With the exception of the midwives, 80 per cent of whom are in the South, these are distributed over the country in much the same pattern as the physicians, that is, they are found in largest ratio to the population in the largest centers, where the most prosperous elements of the population are concentrated.<sup>8</sup> This fact accounts for the apparent shortage of persons in the health occupations while there exists among them a large amount of unemployment.

#### HOSPITALS

A conspicuous modern development in the care of the sick is the hospital. There are now about 7,000 hospitals in the United States, approximately three and one-half times as many as in 1900, with about one million beds. The population per bed varies from less than 250 in the Middle Atlantic and Pacific

<sup>8</sup> See Brown, Esther Lucile, *Physicians and Medical Care*, 1937.

States to more than 500 in the South. The investment in the hospital system amounts to about \$3,000,000,000. Approximately seven per cent of the population become hospital patients in the course of a year.<sup>9</sup>

#### COSTS OF MEDICAL CARE

To maintain the hospital system and the army of persons in the health-conserving occupations, and to purchase medicines used in treatment, the American public pays annually about \$3,600,000,000. Over three-fourths of this comes from fees paid by patients or their families.<sup>10</sup> That this sum, though large, is not excessive, is shown by the incomes of physicians, nurses, and others engaged, directly or indirectly, in caring for the sick. A few physicians receive large incomes for a portion of the period of their practice, but the great majority are rewarded quite modestly in comparison with other occupational groups of equal training and ability. The average annual net income of the physician, as shown by a study made by R. G. Leland, M.D.,<sup>11</sup> is about \$5,250. It is obvious that a good many physicians receive incomes considerably smaller than the average. The private nurse receives an average annual income of about \$1,300, with the prospect of even less if she encounters a period of unemployment.<sup>12</sup> Pharmacists receive very little more than ordinary retail store salesmen. Hospitals rarely collect enough from their patients to operate the plant without subsidy, a fact not surprising when it is recalled that not two generations ago all hospitals were charitable institutions, intended almost entirely for indigents.

Furthermore, the amount spent in the United States for health, as compared with the total income of the people, is not large enough to constitute a burden. It becomes a burden, not because it takes a large share of the national income,

<sup>9</sup> See Rorem, C. Rufus, *Capital Investment in Hospitals*, 1930.

<sup>10</sup> See Reed, Louis Schultz, *The Ability to Pay for Medical Care*, 1933.

<sup>11</sup> "Income from Medical Practice," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. XCVI, May 16, 1931, pp. 1683-91.

<sup>12</sup> Committee on the Judging of Nursing Schools, *Nurses, Production, Education Distribution and Pay*, May 1, 1930, p. 26.

but because it takes a disproportionately large share of the income of certain persons. Illness, although ever present in the population in fairly constant quantity, is always an emergency for the individual. People of small means, among whom, as previously indicated, illness is more frequent than among the well-to-do, find it impossible to save for such emergencies. There is always the possibility, frequently realized, that the family will get through the year without a doctor bill. As long as such a possibility exists, no low-income family can, or should, reduce its already low standard of living in order to have funds available for medical care. It follows that the financial adjustment required to meet the cost of medical care will usually be made after the illness and at a sacrifice which will increase the chances of another illness in the future.

The fact that the poorest groups in the population are unable to pay for medical care has, of course, long been recognized by the medical profession. Some effort has been made to alleviate the situation by supplying such care free or at a nominal cost. But the stigma of charity has always clung to free medical care, with the result that the poor but self-supporting have either done without doctors or burdened themselves hopelessly to pay the bills. The custom of the physician to gauge his fee according to his estimate of the patient's ability to pay works satisfactorily only within narrow limits and in the hands of a socially minded physician. Under modern conditions, moreover, the doctor does not know as much about the economic affairs of his patients as formerly. Incidental services, such as laboratory tests and medicines, do not usually vary in price according to the patient's income. An investigation by Leon Henderson<sup>13</sup> showed that 28 per cent of the loans made by personal finance companies, credit unions, and the like were made to meet expense resulting from illness or death.

Various methods by which the individual may provide for the unexpected expense of illness have been suggested, most of them being in actuality some form of insurance. Whether

<sup>13</sup> *The Use of Small Loans for Medical Expenses*, 1930.

compulsory or voluntary, state or private, insurance spreads the cost uniformly over a large number of persons, so that no unduly large burden need be borne by any. The idea sounds good enough, and for persons of fairly large income it may work satisfactorily, but, as is well known, there are many millions of people in the United States whose incomes, when they have any at all, are sufficient only for the bare necessities of life. People who cannot buy food in the quantity and quality required for an adequate diet cannot pay for medical care, no matter how little it costs. No insurance system, installment payment plan, or any other financial device can alter this fact or its consequences. If the poorest one-third of the population of the United States is to have anything like sufficient medical care, it must be paid for by those in the rest of the population who can afford it.

#### SOCIAL CONTROL OF HEALTH FACTORS—PUBLIC HEALTH

It is highly improbable that disease can ever be completely eliminated, but prevention has already proved so successful that we may hopefully look to it to reduce still further the amount of illness in the population and thus in some degree to reduce the expense of treatment. Prevention, however, can be carried out only through the co-operative activity of the people as a whole. This is the kind of work which for many years has been encompassed by the term public health and provided by so-called public health departments and health officers. Beginning with a very limited sphere of activity, public health has expanded until now it is generally understood to include quarantine and segregation of cases of communicable disease, destruction of disease carriers such as rats, flies, and mosquitoes, control of the public water supply, supervision of milk and other food supplies, and production and distribution of vaccines and antitoxins.<sup>14</sup> There is at present a trend toward widening the scope of public health work by including also the treatment of diseased persons who, if allowed to go untreated, would be likely to become centers

<sup>14</sup> Rankin, W. S., *Medicine and Public Health*, 1930, pp. 5-6.

of infection contributing to the further spread of the disease. The recently manifested interest of public health departments in the treatment of persons afflicted with tuberculosis or with venereal disease are instances in point.

Although a considerable part of the expansion of the public health service has been due to our discovery of its efficiency as a means of preventing epidemics and in the resulting salutary effects on community health, it is also in part due to the necessities of modern urban life. No individual in the present-day American city is able to determine for himself the healthfulness of the environment in which he lives. The food he consumes comes from many different sources. It is handled by many persons whose health status cannot be known to him. Even if he is expert enough to do so, he cannot practically test every morsel of food to determine its wholesomeness before he eats it. He must rely upon the special agents representing the community to guarantee him a good water supply and to protect him against harmful foods. This condition extends even to human contacts. No one can inspect the physical state of each of the numerous persons he has to deal with in the course of the ordinary day's business. Society, through its health departments, must guarantee that no persons carrying infectious diseases are allowed to be at large contaminating healthy individuals.

#### "SOCIALIZED MEDICINE"

It is a well-recognized fact that but for the public schools the children of the poor would receive very little education. We assume, however, that education is of such great social value as to justify providing it by taxation, even of those who have no children at all. Gradually we are arriving at a similar view toward medical care. Already there are many people who believe that all persons should receive free medical care at the expense of the State or of some other governmental unit. They believe in making the healthy and wealthy portions of the population pay for the care of the ill and the poor. Since the latter cannot under any circumstances pay for medical



care themselves, the only question involved is whether the health of its members is worth enough to society to justify preserving it at public expense. While there are still some people who consider care of the health a private affair, it seems obvious that it will be only a matter of time until this group will have become an inconsequential minority. Already there are numerous experimental local plans in operation through which the community by taxing the citizens at large raises money to pay a regular salary to the physician who in return renders specified service to all persons included in the plan.<sup>15</sup> In other cases, large employers provide medical care for their employees and sometimes for the members of employees' families without any charge to the beneficiaries. A number of institutions, such as schools and universities, supply medical care to all persons connected with them. The Army and the Navy have long provided medical care for officers and enlisted men, as well as for the members of their families. More recently, a similar service has been extended to veterans, retired personnel, members of the National Guard, and others. If such a system is practical in the defensive forces, where efficiency is the first requisite, there is no reason why it should not be equally practical in the general population. Comparative studies have shown that the care administered under this system is highly satisfactory from the technical viewpoint, besides its value in assuring the persons concerned that they are secure against the economically crippling effects of serious and prolonged illness.

Socialized medicine will probably come gradually through the extension of public health activities. Already public health has expanded out of the purely preventive field and into the curative. A few decades at most will probably suffice to transfer the business of keeping well into the hands of the state quite as completely as is the business of education. As a result we may reasonably expect an increase of ten years in the life span.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Rorem, C. Rufus, *The Municipal Doctor System in Rural Saskatchewan*, 1931.

<sup>16</sup> See Parran, Thomas, "Health Services of Tomorrow," *The Medical Profession and the Public*, paper read at a joint meeting of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia and the American Academy of Political Science, February 7, 1934.

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## NEUROSES AND PSYCHOSES

THE individual is born into the world with certain needs which must be gratified if he is to live and grow. These needs appear in the beginning to be purely physical in character; they include chiefly the need for food, a mild temperature of the surrounding air, and a comfortable bodily position. At first the individual gives no sign of having the slightest concern about social matters. He is oblivious of his social standing, his wealth, the style and quality of his clothing, the kind of neighborhood he lives in. Moreover, he manifests no interest in what other people think or say of him, however uncomplimentary they may be.

This state of neutrality toward society does not last long. Through the process of conditioning, the individual discovers that his physical needs are supplied by the large, moving objects later identified as human beings. Their presence comes to be desired because of the satisfactions they bring. In the course of time their presence is recognized as a preliminary to the satisfactions and thereafter becomes desirable for itself alone. The willingness of human beings to supply the individual's needs is later discovered to vary with their moods or emotional reactions, and these reactions are found to be related to the individual's own behavior. He learns that by behaving in a certain fashion he can please his parents and thus place them in a mood favorable to the granting of his desires. Deliberate teaching on part of the parents accelerates the process. The modification of his own overt behavior to secure the approval of other persons plays so large a rôle in later life that it dominates the individual in all his activity. Subjectively, the desire for social approval becomes the chief motive for all his social behavior.

At the same time, the individual acquires certain notions about himself as a person. From the way other persons treat him he learns the rôle he is expected to play in the various social groups to which he belongs. He finds certain obligations imposed upon him. If people follow him, he comes to think of himself as a leader; if he must always obey others, he comes to think of himself as a follower. All this becomes a part of his self in the sense that he agrees with the judgment of the group as to the rôle he should play and the obligations he should accept. Any failure to live up to this standard may subsequently cause him to have feelings of failure or of having done wrong, quite apart from the social disapproval which may accompany the act. Many persons, for example, refrain from stealing something they want, even if they are sure they will not be detected. Their "self-respect" or their "conscience" prevents them from acting contrary to their established behavior norms.

#### THE STRESS OF CONFLICT

Equipped with a desire for social approval and a set of habits, many of which have strong affective components, the individual faces the world. Ordinarily, this does not mean a sudden change. There is a gradual transition from a purely vegetative life to the social life of the family, from the family to the neighborhood play group, from the play group to the school, and so on, each circle of contacts being larger than the preceding. The smoother the transition, the more easily the individual will be able to adapt himself to the new situations, but even in the most fortunate careers some difficulties are encountered.

Apparently there is no approachable limit to the amount of social approval desired by the ordinary individual. If he could, he would become at once the most famous and the best-loved person in the world. In his attempts to move toward this goal, he is sure to run into others bent on the same errand. Though he may outstrip many of his rivals, some of them will successfully interrupt his progress, or perhaps stop him altogether.

The sense of defeat and frustration which he must endure in consequence may be extremely painful.

Nor is the conflict limited to encounters with other individuals. Some forms of conflict, possibly the most serious of all, are found within the individual himself. A simple case is that of a man who, knowing that wealth confers high social status, is presented with the opportunity to steal, undetected, a large sum of money. His desire for high standing through wealth is opposed by the social disapproval of theft, which has become so much a part of his personality that he disapproves of theft in all circumstances. He may, in fact, disapprove of theft so violently that he will refuse to recognize that he ever felt any inclination to steal. Or he may convince himself that social position gained through riches is despicable, hence unworthy of the efforts of so honorable a man as himself. No matter how he resolves the conflict, some dissatisfaction is certain to occur in connection with it. Persons who want everything cannot accept less without some feeling of having failed.

For the overwhelming majority, conflicts ending in defeat are common experiences. A few who have been trained to make only modest demands of life may be so fortunate as to get most of what they want without too much effort. Others, blessed with great ability or good luck, may easily gratify most of their desires. These groups may be described as well adjusted to their social environment. It may be presumed that they are relatively happy. Even these occasionally fail, so that it may be truly stated that every person in the world has, at some time or other, faced conflicts too severe for him and felt the sting of defeat. To the great mass of people, conflicts come frequently, if, indeed, they are not ever-present. As in the case of any behavior often repeated, the individual's manner of meeting conflicts of various types becomes standardized and fixed. His manner of reacting constitutes an important part of his personality, being that which indicates the individual's adjustment. If the individual meets his difficulties in ways satisfactory both to himself and to society, we say he is well

adjusted; if, at the other extreme, he can satisfy neither society nor himself, he is poorly adjusted.

#### VARIETIES OF ADJUSTMENT

There are a number of ways in which the individual may react when confronted with a conflict. He may recognize it for what it is, turn over in his mind the possible solutions, then deliberately try the solutions which have occurred to him, one by one, until the conflict has been satisfactorily solved. This, of course, is the ideal reaction and the ideal outcome. The succession of events does not always proceed to this happy conclusion. The individual may have been beaten so many times before that he has no courage to attempt to meet the conflict; or he may refuse to recognize its existence; or he may reason that struggle is futile, because the world will soon come to an end. Reactions like these may be found from time to time in individuals whose adjustments on the whole are satisfactory enough, but when they come to be the regular or habitual way of meeting difficulties, they indicate maladjustments of the kind dealt with in this chapter.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEUROSES AND PSYCHOSES

In general, the less serious forms of maladjustment are included under the term neurosis and the more serious under mental disease or psychosis. Practically all of the victims of the former maintain their social relations with sufficient success to be regarded as sane; many of the latter are regarded as insane and, consequently, are denied the right to function in the group as adult members. Both forms are characterized by ways of meeting the problems of life which are not in accord with those accepted as normal in a given society. Since practically every individual varies perceptibly from the "normal" or "average" in his reactions, the identification of abnormality rests on the extent or degree of variation held to be significant. Because of the different demands of two groups, a person may be normal in one and abnormal in the other. In

the determination of what is normal for purpose of diagnosing behavior disorders, only a common-sense standard can be used. The existing state of knowledge in the patient's group, the social attitudes with which he has been in contact, and the training he has received must all be taken into account. Thus, if he comes from a group which believes that the earth is flat and that one's enemies can be destroyed by witchcraft, he cannot be justly charged with having delusions merely because he shares these beliefs. It is not delusion for the savage to believe in and practice magic, whereas it would be for a modern, well-educated city dweller.

Two classes of neuroses and psychoses may be noted. The first of these, which includes the majority of the cases, is, so far as we can tell, purely functional, that is, no defects of the physical organism have been observed which may be considered as causal factors. As a disease of this class advances, physical defects may occur, but these are symptoms or results of the disease rather than causes. In the second class are those diseases in which well-defined conditions of physical abnormality appear to be the prerequisites of the disease, such as lesions of the central nervous system or states of intoxication. No perfectly clear line of demarcation between the two classes can be drawn.

Physical abnormalities function as causes only in that they are accompanied by the disease. They do not in any sense explain the symptoms of the disease itself. Thus, while the destructive action of the germs of syphilis may be considered the cause of general paralysis, a knowledge of this fact does not help to account for the delusions of grandeur which may trouble the patient and his associates. However, in the case of mental diseases caused by physical defects or disorders, as, for example, paranoia of the deaf, cures may result from the restoration of the general health.

#### TYPES OF NEUROSIS AND PSYCHOSIS

Careful observation and study have given us descriptions of a number of distinct neurotic and psychotic disorders. As in

the case of bodily diseases, each variety is distinguished by a group of symptoms which, when taken together, constitute a syndrome or typical picture of the disease. The individual symptoms may enter into the syndromes of a number of separate diseases. The identification of a particular disease must be made, therefore, on the basis of the total combination of symptoms manifested, not on the basis of one or several.

Unfortunately for the diagnostician, the symptoms are not always easy to observe. They consist, for the most part, of reactions to certain situations, usually social in character. In the absence of appropriate situations, the symptoms are not apparent. Thus a person morbidly afraid of high places may conceal the fact by managing always to avoid situations calling forth the fear. Or a person who falsely believes himself to be a great inventor may appear to be quite normal until someone or something brings the subject of invention into the conversation. Long periods of observation are necessary, as a rule, to establish the diagnosis of nervous and mental diseases.

Another difficulty is found in the tendency of these diseases to appear but seldom in the typical form. Usually, the patient displays a rather complicated set of symptoms through which more than one disease may be indicated. Sometimes a central group of symptoms may stand out clearly from the rest and form the basis of a satisfactory diagnosis; in many other instances, the diagnostician is so nearly baffled by the complexity of the case that he must either refrain from making a diagnosis or take the chance of having others disagree with him. The difficulty is reflected in the different varieties of nervous and mental disease recognized by various psychiatrists. So far as the brief discussion here is concerned, however, there is sufficient agreement so that controversial points may be avoided.

#### NEURASTHENIA

The most general and least serious of the neuroses is neurasthenia. Probably all persons manifest symptoms of this disease, but so infrequently as still to retain their status as normal individuals. About ten per cent of the general popu-



lation of America seems to be definitely afflicted. Only a small proportion of the victims, however, are so nearly disabled as to require institutional care. Most of them continue year after year to play a sorry part in life, making all their friends and relatives, as well as themselves, miserable.

The chief symptom of neurasthenia is a feeling of fatigue. This feeling shows no relation to the amount of effort expended, but it does seriously interfere with the individual's ability to work. The fatigue of the neurasthenic appears to be more severe than that of the ordinary person. Other symptoms include pains in various parts of the body, most frequently in the head. These pains may be assumed by the patient to be the symptoms of bodily diseases, from which he tries to seek relief. Naturally, he finds no relief, since, in the first place, he does not have the disease and, second, he does not really want to be rid of the symptoms. Disorders of the digestive tract are also common among neurasthenics. Various kinds of food do not agree with them. Sometimes they can keep their health only by the most careful and meticulous dieting. Nervous indigestion, constipation, dyspepsia, and loss of appetite are commonly complained of in this connection.

Anomalies of sensation, such as undue sensitivity to light and noise, interfere with the neurasthenic's efforts to concentrate his attention on work or rest and, consequently, irritate him excessively. Sometimes the objectionable sensations are subjective in origin and are experienced as continuous ringing or pounding in the ears. Along with these symptoms, possibly as a result of them, is found a state of depression or anxiety. The patient is discouraged by his illness and feels that the future may bring him still greater suffering than the present.

#### CAUSES

Neurasthenia may be viewed as a way of reacting to conflict, a form of adjustment. Its victims have developed feelings of inferiority out of their experiences with the problems of life. They have not won the success required for the satisfaction of their egos. They feel themselves inadequate to cope with the

difficulties confronting them, yet are unwilling to accept for their part the inferior rôle to which their accomplishments entitle them. This feeling may have little basis in actual facts. The victim of the inferiority complex may be just as capable and successful as many persons who are quite satisfied with their achievements, but, because of his extreme introversion, he cannot readily make comparisons between himself and others. He attends so diligently to himself that he scarcely notices others or the impression he makes upon them. He is, therefore, often accused of being selfish. Unintentionally he is selfish, for he continually monopolizes all his social relations with the story of his own troubles. There is good reason for the neurasthenic's everlasting insistence upon his symptoms. They constitute for him, though he does not realize it, his excuse for not doing better in the world. If a person is ill, tired, and dyspeptic, he cannot, of course, be expected to compete on equal terms with normal, healthy persons. He must be excused for not accomplishing anything. Moreover, the illness itself gives him a certain distinction. By insisting upon having the window shades drawn, upon low conversation, selected food, and special services of every sort, the neurasthenic can tyrannize over his friends and relatives to an astonishing degree. He can in this way win as much attention as many a person with real accomplishments. No wonder he refuses to give up his illness; no wonder he thinks he is the most "nervous" person in the world. These symptoms constitute his technique for getting what he wants, just as crying constitutes the adjustment technique of the infant. He will not relinquish it as long as it works.

The disease may set in as the immediate consequence of overwork. The individual may have planned to achieve a certain goal by his efforts. As time goes on, it becomes more and more apparent that he cannot succeed. His self-respect will not permit him to relax his efforts. He cannot openly admit failure. A "nervous breakdown" saves him from the difficulty. It is not then his "fault" for having to stop. He is ill; he merits sympathy and attention for his misfortune. Such an individ-

ual may recover and try once more, but if the fear of failure arises, he is likely to retreat again into helplessness.

In other instances, neurasthenia begins as a means whereby persons who have no functions in life accepted by society as worth while manage to secure attention. The well-to-do wife in a community which frowns upon women engaging in gainful occupation is frequently a victim of this disease. Her "nervousness" may be the only way open to her to remind the members of her family that she exists. Through an emphasis upon her symptoms, she may be able to force the routine of the family to revolve around her and her desires. The success of the procedure depends upon the existence of a group of attitudes in society encompassed by the term sympathy. These attitudes are comparatively recent in their appearance, a fact which may account for the apparent absence of "nervousness" in rude and primitive societies. If no one ever felt sorry for the neurasthenic, he could probably not succeed long in feeling sorry for himself, and the disease would soon become rare.

#### HYSTERIA

In the normal individual, the experiences of life tend to be integrated, that is, bound together in a continuous, consistent whole. Each new experience is lived in the light of the past, with which it is compared and evaluated and given its proper place. In a certain sense, all of life from the beginning to the present appears to be a single experience. The individual may realize that he has changed radically with the passage of time, yet he feels that he has been the same person throughout his entire life. Inconsistencies and contradictions in his actions appear to him to be due to differences in the stimuli, rather than to differences in the responses.

In the hysterical individual, experiences tend to be unintegrated. They do not seem to be connected with each other. The totality of experience is like a collection of unrelated episodes. The extent of the dissociation may vary from a slight absent-mindedness to complete amnesia and the appearance of multiple personalities in a single individual.

The extraverted type of person is more likely to be afflicted with hysteria than the introvert. The lack of reflection characteristic of extravert behavior probably permits the accumulation of diverse experiences without proper integration, with the result that the personality is at best only loosely organized. When, therefore, the strain of conflict comes, the connections give way and dissociation follows. Hollingworth finds that the victims of hysteria show a poorer performance on intelligence tests than sufferers from other neuroses.<sup>1</sup> This fact suggests that hysteria attacks the naïve or unintrospective person, who lacks power to grasp the nature of his troubles and who, consequently, "goes to pieces."

#### SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of hysteria may be conveniently divided into two groups on the basis of their duration: the more or less permanent symptoms or stigmata and the recurrent or occasional symptoms or accidents. A brief description of the more conspicuous forms of each group will give some notion of the nature of the disease.

Suggestibility and lack of will power are commonly observed in the hysteric. Since he cannot make up his mind without effort, he readily falls in with suggestions presented to him by the social environment. In this way, he acquires stigmata in the form of symptoms of organic diseases. His naïveté often manifests itself in this connection, for the symptoms are in accord with his own erroneous ideas of what they should be for a particular disease, instead of corresponding to reality. Thus in anesthesia, or loss of feeling, the portion of the body affected is likely to be a part recognized in common speech, such as the hand, the foot, the right or left side of the body, without regard for the nerve connections involved. Paralysis also occurs without regard for the muscle groups involved or the nerves connecting them. The symptoms of almost any organic disease may be manifested by the hysteric, all without discoverable organic cause. The absence of or-

<sup>1</sup>Hollingworth, H. L., *The Psychology of Functional Neuroses*, 1920, pp. 80-99.

ganic symptoms, together with the inaccuracy of the functional symptoms, usually makes the diagnosis of hysteria comparatively easy. Cases have been known, however, in which for a long time the true nature of the disease eluded the physician.

#### ACCIDENTS

Attacks in the form of elation, depression, loss of appetite, sleepwalking, trances, or catalepsy may occur in hysteria. In extreme cases, there may be complete lapse of memory lasting for days or months, from which the patient recovers without knowing what has happened during the interval. Sometimes he finds that he has left his home and gone to a strange place where he is living under an assumed name. The tendency to wander during the period suggests that the forgetfulness is the result of a desire to escape from an unpleasant situation.

The experiences of the individual during the period which he cannot remember form a system of their own. While the patient may have lost all sense of his real identity, he usually has no difficulty, during the period of his amnesia, in maintaining the identity which he has assumed for the time. His behavior is quite likely to be entirely consistent. He remembers the name he has chosen, the address of his residence, the friends he has made during the period. We may say of him truly that he has been temporarily another person. If, as sometimes happens, he should display a tendency to return from time to time to the identity of the other person, we speak of him as possessing a dual personality. In rare instances, persons with three or more personalities have been found. Because of the partial nature of these personalities, they may be spared much of the stress of conflict and consequently may be fairly stable. Their separate existence indicates the achievement of complete dissociation.

#### CAUSAL FACTORS

Mental conflict too severe for the loosely knit personality to endure appears to be the immediate cause of hysteria.

Freud refines this theory by stating that hysteria results from the unsuccessful attempt to repress desires which are in conflict with the moral sense.<sup>2</sup> The solution of the conflict is found in dissociation, whereby the desire and the disapproval are separated, so that they no longer oppose each other.

#### TREATMENT

To attempt to remove the symptoms is, of course, futile, since no organic disease is present, though temporary relief may be induced by hypnosis. Medicines are not likely to help, except insofar as they aid in giving the suggestion that their use will result in a cure. Since the patient wants to keep his symptoms, he is not likely to be affected by treatment which gives him attention and consideration as long as it lasts. To overcome the disease it is necessary to re-establish the connections between the separate divisions of the patient's experiences. Suggestion is the most successful method hitherto devised for the purpose.

#### PSYCHASTHENIA

The word "psychasthenia" means mental weakness, which describes fairly well the third of the more common nervous diseases. To the psychasthenic the world has become a strange and unknowable place. His experiences do not seem to be real, or he feels that some other person is having them. His sense of detachment may be so exaggerated as to make him feel that he is a stranger even in the midst of a familiar environment. He has little confidence in his own power to meet difficulties. The condition is likely to develop gradually following the strain of continued conflict to which the individual cannot make adequate adjustment.

The symptoms of psychasthenia, unlike those of hysteria and neurasthenia, are nearly all mental. They fall into two general classes; obsessions and compulsions. An obsession is a form of mental activity, usually an emotion, which appears

<sup>2</sup> See Freud, Sigmund, *Selected Papers on Hysteria and Other Psychoneuroses*, 1909.

without adequate stimulus and which cannot be controlled by the individual. Among the more common obsessions are the various phobias. A phobia is an irrational fear. The victim may realize that there is no ground for his fear, but the emotion overcomes him nonetheless. Almost every situation in life known to the individual may become the setting for a phobia. Long lists of varieties have been compiled by students of abnormal psychology. As examples may be mentioned agoraphobia and claustrophobia, which are, respectively, the fear of open spaces and the fear of closed spaces. The irrational character of these fears is shown by the existence of phobophobia, the fear of fear. Other forms of obsession are found in irrational beliefs, which the individual cannot get rid of, even though he knows there is no basis for the belief; in preoccupation with an irrelevant thought which will not be put out of mind; and in unexplainable doubts, which no proofs will permanently remove.

Compulsions are similar to obsessions except in that some physical action is involved. The person who feels bound to step on all the cracks in the sidewalk, or to wash his hands again and again, or to rise repeatedly from his bed to make sure he has locked the door, suffers from a compulsion. Some forms of compulsion are found so frequently and are of such great social significance as to have special names, for example, pyromania and kleptomania. The former denotes an uncontrollable desire to start fires, often of a highly destructive character. The individual so afflicted is likely to find himself arraigned for arson under circumstances which make it difficult for him to avoid punishment. The kleptomaniac is an involuntary thief. He cannot help taking certain articles, even though they may be of no recognizable value to him. The victims of these forms of compulsion are quite likely to be treated as criminals, unless they happen to be in a sympathetic social environment.

Tics are involuntary movements, usually in the form of jerks, repeated over and over again, by a single muscle or a group of small muscles. The movement is entirely outside the in-

dividual's power of control. He experiences the tic as if the muscles concerned were acting solely of their own volition. Distraction tends to increase the tic movement. It may be a source of great embarrassment to the victim, who may be fully aware of the fact that his face is twitching, yet may be utterly unable to stop it.

#### CAUSAL FACTORS AND TREATMENT

Psychasthenia results from a lowering of the psychological tension, which must be kept taut if the individual is to retain his personality in a unified, controlled fashion. This lowering of the tension permits the breakdown of the organizing and directing function of the mind. The condition seems to bear some relation to the state of general health, being especially likely to occur following a long, weakening illness. The Freudian explanation of psychasthenia holds this disease due to a partial dissociation resulting from suppressed sex desires of an antisocial character.

The relationship of psychasthenia to physical disease suggests the desirability of building up the general health as far as possible. Beyond this, there is little to be done. Regulation of the mental life may be undertaken through a process of analysis, but it is of value only when done with exceptional care and skill.

#### MENTAL DISEASES

The important differences between neuroses and psychoses are social. In the case of the former, the disease is, as a rule, not completely disabling. The victim can still attend to his affairs, after a fashion, and keep his place in the community. His actions, though perhaps erratic, are yet consistent enough so that he can in general be counted on. In the case of the latter, the individual's behavior is so far different from that of the "normal" person that he is not regarded as capable of managing his own affairs with ordinary prudence. He may also be potentially dangerous or damaging to the community. Restraint or confinement has come to be society's defense



against the mentally diseased. From this it may be concluded that mental disease is more severe than nervous disease, but this severity becomes, upon examination, only a social judgment, based upon the relative danger to the community of the victims of the two kinds of disease.

#### THE EXTENT OF MENTAL DISEASE

According to reports from the Bureau of the Census, the hospitals of the United States offering care for mental cases had on their books at the end of 1937 a total of 500,198 patients, of whom 445,031 were residing in the institutions. Of the total number, 85 per cent were in State institutions, 7.7 per cent were in county and city hospitals, 4.8 per cent were in United States veterans' hospitals, and 2.5 per cent in private hospitals. More than two-thirds of the admissions for 1937 were to State Hospitals.

As a rule, in each State, either the manic-depressive type or the dementia praecox type was the most common form of psychosis among first admissions. There were a few exceptions to this general rule, however. In New Hampshire and New Jersey psychosis with cerebral arteriosclerosis was the most common form, and in Nevada, senile psychosis. The proportion of the first admissions whose cases were undiagnosed was large in Illinois, Michigan, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Colorado; and the proportion without psychosis was large in Vermont, Virginia, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Colorado. The large percentage without psychosis is partially accounted for by the fact that some of the hospitals for mental disease have special departments for the treatment of alcoholism.<sup>3</sup>

The large and growing number of patients in hospitals for mental disease strongly suggests that mental disease is becoming more prevalent. Against the obvious conclusion there is, however, some evidence showing that better facilities for care and the increasing age of the general population are important factors.<sup>4</sup> The sex ratio of first admissions to State hospitals is

<sup>3</sup> United States Bureau of the Census, *Newsrelease*, released for use of newspapers on January 10, 1938, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Winston, Ellen, "The Assumed Increase of Mental Disease," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XL, No. 4, January, 1935, pp. 427-39.

about 137, while the sex ratio of the patients on the books is about 110. This indicates that mental disease attacks males more frequently than females, but that recoveries and improvements leading to discharge are in larger proportion among the males.

### SCHIZOPHRENIA (DEMENTIA PRAECOX)

Schizophrenia is the most common of all the forms of mental disease. It made up more than one-fifth of the total first admissions to State hospitals for 1936, and an even larger proportion of the readmissions. It should be noted also that the recovery rate for this disease is low, so that the proportion of patients with schizophrenia in the State hospitals reaches one-third or more of the total patient population. The cities furnish a disproportionately large number of the cases, due in part to the greater prevalence of the disease in the urban environment and in part to the age distribution of the city population, which contains a larger share of persons in the age groups most susceptible to the disease. It is possible also that cases of schizophrenia are more likely to be committed to hospital care in the city than in the country. The name suggests that it is the "insanity of adolescence," but the majority of the cases first come to attention between the ages of twenty and forty. Some do not appear until the patient is well past middle age.

### SYMPTOMS

Schizophrenia is the psychosis of the shut-in personality. The victim sometimes becomes uncommunicative to the point of paying little attention to anything said to him. He rarely starts a conversation on his own account. Because of this lack of response, the dementia praecox patient seems incomprehensible. It is all but impossible to feel a sympathetic appreciation of his difficulties; he appears to be utterly inhuman in his reactions. Such actions as he does undertake appear to be entirely devoid of emotional accompaniments. He has no sense of humor. He may relate, with utmost calm and indifference, stories of horrible experiences he believes himself to have had.

Apparently his capacity to feel has all but disappeared. The ordinary incentives to action no longer affect him. He has neither pride nor ambition; he recognizes no duties; pleasures do not tempt him. He is indifferent to life in all its aspects. He may, in consequence, sit for years silently staring at nothing, giving no sign of being aware of what is going on around him.

During the early stages, hallucinations and delusions are likely to be found among the symptoms, but as the disease progresses these give way to the state of listlessness and immobility. The disuse of the mental powers following the withdrawal from the world leads to their gradual deterioration. The extent of this deterioration is, however, easily overestimated, since the patient does not readily give the response by which his mentality may be known. Four types of schizophrenia are recognized by psychiatrists. Each is defined by a group of specific symptoms.

#### CAUSAL FACTORS

A large proportion of the cases of dementia praecox come from families in which other members have been afflicted with the disease. This suggests the existence of a hereditary factor, but does not by any means prove it. Since the disease appears to be functional in character and since no organic basis for it has been found, its tendency to run in family lines may mean only that the cultural conditions which produce it tend to be the same for the several members of the family. Life histories of patients strongly indicate that early experiences play a part in the determination of the shut-in personality, thereby laying the foundation for schizophrenia. Quite possibly, this form of psychosis may be explained as a set of habits, gradually developed, whereby the individual escapes the problems of life and the responsibilities imposed upon him.

#### MANIC-DEPRESSIVE PSYCHOSIS

As indicated by the name, manic-depressive psychosis has two contrasting phases, so different and distinct as to suggest

to the casual observer two diseases instead of one. Formerly these two phases were called mania and melancholia, respectively, and were regarded as unrelated. Recent studies have shown certain similarities in the two forms, and many patients have been observed who manifest both of them alternately. They may be regarded as variations of the same sort, but in opposite directions from normality.

Many normal persons experience variations in their reactions differing only in degree or intensity from those of the manic-depressive. Sometimes the world seems to be a very desirable place; the individual feels fortunate, happy, full of energy. He is gay and cheerful; his work becomes play; he is friendly with everyone. The same individual may at another time appear to be a different person. He would then describe himself as feeling "blue." The world looks dark and gloomy. The future holds forth no bright promises, but only the certainty of failure. His friends shun him; his work is drudgery; everything goes wrong. The individual concerned and his acquaintances recognize that he is not quite himself during these periods, but they pay little attention to the matter. They realize that in a short time he will be himself again.

If these states are exaggerated so that the individual becomes conspicuous, obnoxious, or dangerous, he may be judged a manic-depressive. In the milder forms of the manic phase the patient is extremely talkative, self-assertive, and active. He is boundlessly optimistic and cheerful. He appears to be well pleased with everything; his undertakings are conducted with tireless enthusiasm. The more severe forms of mania show the same symptoms greatly intensified. The patient loses his ability to keep his attention fixed; his speech shows "flight of ideas" in which it may be impossible to discern anything but disconnected words. His actions are quick, erratic, sometimes violent. He is a typical raving maniac. He may suffer also from illusions and hallucinations.

On the other side of normality is found the melancholic. In the milder forms, his condition may be described as a great slowing up of activity, together with a feeling of dejection and

despondency. The melancholic patient talks but little; moves slowly and reluctantly; takes no interest in the world. Feelings of guilt and sin overwhelm him and fill him with remorse and grief. He may think he is too wicked to live, and attempt, in consequence, to take his own life. In the more severe forms of melancholia, the individual sinks into a motionless stupor from which he can be roused only with difficulty. It may be necessary to feed him forcibly in order to prevent him from death by starvation.

Unhappily for the diagnostician, not all cases show the combinations of symptoms which mark them clearly as manic or depressive. Mixed states, in which, for example, the patient shows the lively thought and elation of mania with the retarded motor activity of the depressive, are not uncommon. All possible combinations are found.

#### CAUSAL FACTORS

According to Bridges, hereditary tendencies toward the disease are found in 80 per cent of the cases. Pressey considers it the prime example of inherited mental disease. Others have suggested that endocrinal disturbances supply the organic base of this disease. McDougall considers it the result of an unbalance in the self-assertive and self-submissive instincts, which in the normal state tend to counteract each other. None of these explanations is altogether satisfactory. Since the disease appears to be a purely functional disorder, an explanation in terms of function is more likely to fit the facts. Such an explanation is given by White,<sup>5</sup> who regards the actions of the manic-depressive as the expressions of extreme extraversion. "The patient is unconsciously attempting to escape inner conflict by a "flight into reality." His continuous activity, constantly changing, enables him to keep from thinking of himself. The depressive phase results from a failure of the "flight." The patient has given up. He admits his faults and his worthlessness. His self-respect and self-assertiveness disappear com-

<sup>5</sup> White, William A., *Outlines of Psychiatry*, 1923, pp. 139-40.

pletely. Sometimes, however, the accusations he directs against himself are really intended for another person, for whom he has substituted himself.

#### PROGNOSIS

The majority of manic-depressives recover from the disease, but are, as might be expected if the disease is functional, more likely to contract it again than are those who have never had it. Recovered patients nearly always return to the social situation from which they came. Often the same conflict-producing factors which brought about the disease in the first place are still operative. In the course of time, these factors are likely to cause a recurrence of the disorder. Unhappily, neither our means of control nor our knowledge are sufficient to enable us to provide a safe environment for newly recovered manic-depressives.

Attacks of the disease may vary in duration from a few days to several years. Between them may be periods of normality, equally variable in length. Under favorable circumstances, the patient may be paroled during these periods and permitted to live at home, where ordinarily he is much happier than in the hospital.

#### PARANOIA

Though relatively uncommon, this form of psychosis is mentioned because it so clearly exemplifies disorder of the personality. Apparently some individuals are more susceptible than others to the contraction of the disease. When such individuals encounter opposition in their strivings for social approval and recognition, they are likely to assume attitudes of antagonism toward some of their associates. These attitudes, supported by faulty observation and illogical reasoning, may develop into firmly established ideas of persecution. The victim of paranoia may thus come to believe himself in danger from persons who seek to do him harm while pretending to be his friends. Through wrong interpretations, he sees in the acts of others the evidence for his conclusions. Ultimately he

may become so alarmed over his safety that he may take violent action to defend himself.

In other cases, the paranoiac meets his failures by losing his true identity and assuming that of an important and presumably successful personage. To himself, thereafter, he is no longer the humble individual seen by his friends, but a rich, powerful man, for whom nothing is impossible. In this strange form of adjustment is to be observed the acquisition of social approval and the evasion of personal responsibility by a process of systematic self-deception. Since a cure requires the patient to submit to a diminution of his ego, paranoia is extremely difficult to treat successfully.

#### OTHER PSYCHOSES

Certain other forms of mental disease, psychosis with cerebral arteriosclerosis, senile dementia, and general paralysis, furnish examples of the group of psychoses in which organic factors are apparent. Although a variety of symptoms are displayed during the course of these diseases, they have in common a tendency toward a decay or degeneration of the mental powers. As previously suggested, the presence of organic factors does not, of course, explain the mental symptoms of these diseases. It shows the dependence of the sound mind upon a sound body, nothing more. However, since the appearance of the organic defect, be it hardening of the arteries or the effects of syphilitic infection, is necessary to the appearance of the disease, attempts at cure and prevention may well be directed toward the removal of the organic defect. This circumstance places the problem of controlling psychoses of this character more properly in the field of medicine as commonly understood than in the field of psychiatry.

#### ALCOHOLISM

The drinking of alcoholic liquor has long been a moral question. Defenders of drinking there have been in plenty, but none have successfully argued its value on moral grounds. Here the objectors have had the field to themselves, and they

have had much to say about the wickedness and sinfulness of strong drink. They have enlisted the aid of the church and the school and even the government in bringing moral suasion to bear on those who persist in drinking. They have quoted extensively the reports of scientific investigations purporting to show the physiological harmfulness of alcohol. The result, considering the time and energy involved in pressing the immorality of drinking, has been slight. Many people continue the practice in spite of the strong moral disapproval to which they are subjected. This fact is one of the most significant pieces of evidence we have to the effect that alcohol does in fact provide the consumer with certain satisfactions that are extremely valuable to him. These satisfactions are by no means the same for all; consequently, there is no single answer to the question: Why do men drink?

Quite likely, however, the chief reason for the consumption of alcohol is to be found in its psychological effects. In general, this effect may be described as anesthetic. Alcohol lowers sensitivity to all kinds of stimuli, including pain; it removes inhibitions; it dispels fear; it gives a sense of well-being. To the man whose life is full of conflict, inner and outer, whose security is constantly threatened, whose most common self-feeling is one of inferiority, alcohol offers at least a temporary relief.

Modern society finds many of its members beset with inhibitions, uncertainties, and doubts. They cannot act, because the issues are not clear or because the questions are too complex. Alcohol removes the complexities and banishes hindrances to action. It releases the individual from the hampering restrictions of his own personality. It gives him freedom. Other persons suffer from feelings of inadequacy and inferiority; they lack the courage to face unfamiliar or complex social situations. These, also, find in alcohol a cure for their troubles. Under its influence they have the experience of being clever, wise, profound, courageous, able to meet all opponents and to overcome all difficulties.

Some men use alcohol to help them over emergencies. A



speech or an interview seems less terrifying in prospect and seems to go off better if preceded by a drink. From occasional use, such men may come to rely upon alcohol, not only for real emergencies but also for strength to carry on all the ordinary activities of life. Ultimately they cannot undertake anything without the support of alcohol. For still others, drink is a means of attaining conviviality. The dull conversation of commonplace people who have nothing to say becomes sparkling repartee after a few rounds of cocktails. Reserve and bashfulness are replaced by gayety and abandon. Stiffness and formality give way to congeniality and even to intimacy. The palest of wit seems excruciatingly funny.

In none of these cases is the desired result obtained by the individual who becomes so drunk as to be no longer aware of his environment. Yet there are people for whom this is an end deliberately sought. Common laborers who are always tired and underfed, who have no cheerful or even decent home life or recreation, who see in the future nothing but increasing poverty and misery for themselves and their children, may seek in drink the oblivion in which they can forget their troubles. For them drinking has no esthetic aspects; it is merely a short cut to a stupidity so deep that nothing matters. The confirmed inebriate may keep himself in this state continuously, never allowing himself to become conscious enough to appreciate his condition.

Though less important than the psychological effects, alcohol also has physical effects for which it may be consumed. It tends to dull the sense of fatigue and to increase the inner feeling of muscular strength and power. It gives a sensation of warmth which is comforting to persons who are exposed to cold. Quite probably it also becomes a physiological requirement for persons who have consumed it regularly over a long period of time, so that definite discomfort is felt in abstinence.

#### DRUG ADDICTION

The effects described above are even more conspicuous in the case of drugs, such as opiates and cocaine, the use of which

is in general motivated by the same desires as is the use of alcohol. The effect of the habitual use of drugs is, however, much more devastating than that of drink. Drugs rapidly produce physical as well as mental deterioration in their victims. The craving for the drug may become so strong in the individual as to lead him to commit the most serious crimes in the attempt to secure a few more doses. Once established, the drug habit can rarely be broken by the individual without assistance. The baneful effects of drugs are so apparent that no society mindful of its welfare can tolerate their general use. There is no public argument in favor of permitting the sale of drugs, as in the case of alcoholic liquors. Consequently, although opium smoking is still prevalent in parts of the Orient, the problem of drug addiction in America has been reduced to comparatively small dimensions. Estimates of the number of drug addicts in the United States range from a hundred thousand to a million.

#### THE PROHIBITION MOVEMENT

Throughout the whole period of our national life, the sale of alcoholic drink has been a moral issue. For this reason it has never been possible to evaluate the consumption of alcohol on the basis of its actual effect on human welfare. Every conceivable argument has appeared on both sides of the controversy. Both sides have appealed to science, economics, history, and the Bible. The conclusions drawn have often been entirely unwarranted by the facts adduced.

The temperance movement began about 1800. As its name implies, it did not advocate complete abstinence and, in the beginning, it opposed only the consumption of distilled liquors in excessive amounts. Ale, beer, and wine were regarded as necessary items in the human diet. Propaganda for temperance, disseminated through societies organized for the purpose, was directed at individuals. By 1835, these societies had a million members. With the gain in numbers, the movement became more inclusive in its objectives, soon reaching the point where it favored total abstinence and urged the passage of

legislation to make liquor selling illegal. Between 1850 and 1860, fourteen States enacted prohibition laws. With the sole exception of the law of Maine, all these were repealed, annulled, or declared unconstitutional within the next few years.

These reversals proved to be only a temporary setback to the forces of prohibition. Two important organizations, the Prohibition Party and the Women's Christian Temperance Union, were organized in 1869 and 1874, respectively. By 1880 a strong prohibition movement was under way. The Anti-Saloon League began its activities in 1893, and from that time on prohibition sentiment gained steadily, though at first slowly. Alcohol was pictured as the chief, if not the only, cause of crime, poverty, family disorganization, disease, and death. Under laws inspired by prohibition enthusiasts, school children studied textbooks which described the damaging effect of alcohol upon every important organ of the body. Thousands of men in all social classes signed total abstinence pledges.

Restrictive legislation applied to the liquor traffic indicated the growing sentiment of opposition to it. Saloons were ordered to close on Sundays, on election days, and at specified hours every day. They were prohibited from selling liquor to minors or to habitual drunkards. "Dry" territory was created in many States by local and county option laws. The "wets" countered not only with propaganda for personal liberty but also by permitting local governmental units to become dependent for their financial support upon taxes paid by liquor dealers. They carried their arguments to court, but almost always lost. By 1916, about one half of the States were dry and over one half of the population lived in dry territory.

The exigencies of the World War re-enforced prohibition sentiment sufficiently to bring about national prohibition, first by emergency legislation, later by amendment to the constitution. The Eighteenth Amendment, going into effect on January 16, 1920, inaugurated a period marked by increasing dissatisfaction with the results of attempts to enforce its provisions. In the beginning, consumption of alcohol was greatly reduced, but soon it began to rise. A bootleg liquor industry arose, ulti-

mately reaching such dimensions as to defy successfully the law-enforcement agencies at almost every turn. In many communities, where the people were opposed to prohibition, it was difficult to secure convictions from juries, no matter how convincing the evidence. Several States repealed the supporting legislation they had passed following the enactment of the Federal prohibition act, leaving the problems of enforcement to be solved by the national government without State aid. When the Wickersham Committee on Law Observance reported in 1931, it was clearly shown that the enforcement of the prohibition laws had failed, yet so firm was the belief in the fundamental rightness of prohibition even then, that the Committee did not recommend the repeal of the law.

Agitation for the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment became especially powerful after the depression began. Some persons apparently believed that repeal would favorably affect business conditions. Others, including many who believed in the desirability of general total abstinence, were convinced that a prohibition which did not prohibit was worse than none at all. There was some evidence that a general disregard for law resulted from unenforced prohibition; also that the large profits of the bootleg liquor industry were used to corrupt public officials, who were bribed to permit violations of a law for the enforcement of which there was little public demand.

Congress passed the repeal resolution in February, 1933. The States ratified it quickly, and on December 5, 1933, the Eighteenth Amendment and the legislation enacted to carry out its provisions were repealed. The experiment, thus brought ignominiously to an end, teaches nothing about the goodness or badness of alcohol as a beverage or as a narcotic. It does, however, demonstrate the faultiness of the ordering-and-forbidding technique as a means of morals regulation in situations where there is a large recalcitrant minority.

#### THE CONTROL OF DRUGS

Most of the efforts to limit the sale of drugs have centered around opium and its derivatives, which formerly made up an

important item in the exports of India to China and, incidentally, to other parts of the world. In forcing China for more than fifty years to accept opium imports, Great Britain played a rôle dictated by commercial rather than humanitarian interests. Beginning in 1907, the trade was restricted by the provisions of an Anglo-Chinese agreement, and in 1917 all Chinese ports were closed to the importation of Indian opium. Meanwhile, Britain has greatly reduced the production of opium in India. In 1909, an international opium commission met in Shanghai, and in 1912 an opium conference was held at The Hague. The World War prevented any significant accomplishments, and the work was subsequently taken over by the League of Nations. A number of meetings and conferences were held in Geneva, with the result that agreements for international co-operation to control opium manufacture were secured from practically all countries. Similar control was extended to other narcotics.<sup>6</sup>

In the United States, the limitation of the sale of drugs has been carried out under the Harrison Act of 1914, which provides that all persons selling drugs must be licensed and that all packages of drugs must bear revenue stamps. In 1929, Congress provided for the establishment of two narcotic farms for the confinement and treatment of addicts who have been convicted of offenses against the narcotic laws.

Public opinion strongly supports laws forbidding illegitimate uses of drugs, and consequently convictions of proved violators are comparatively easy to secure. The cravings of addicts are so severe and the profits in supplying them so great that a small trade continues nonetheless. More recently, difficulties have arisen in the control of marijuana, a drug apparently introduced into this country from Mexico. It is the product of a plant easily grown anywhere in the United States, and is usable with practically no preparatory process. Indications are that the use of marijuana is spreading and that it may prove a troublesome problem before effective means of combating it have been perfected.

<sup>6</sup> *World Peace Foundation Pamphlets*, Vol. VIII, Nos. 8-9, 1925, pp. 552-60.

## CARE OF THE MENTALLY DISEASED

Erroneous ideas as to the nature of mental disease have persisted until quite recent times. Even as late as in the eighteenth century, mentally diseased persons were believed to be possessed by evil spirits or to be supernaturally inspired. Obviously, nothing effective in the way of treatment was available in the circumstances. The patients were sometimes starved, beaten, or otherwise tortured in the hope that mistreating the body would drive out the devils supposedly inhabiting it. Asylums for the insane were little more than prisons where dangerous patients were confined as a measure of protection to society. Because of the seemingly unhuman character of most behavior of mentally diseased persons, normal persons had no understanding of mental disease. Their attitude toward the victims was a mixture of fear, aversion, and amusement. In England and even in the United States,<sup>7</sup> less than two hundred years ago, mad-houses were visited by diversion seekers, just as now people visit the zoo to see fierce animals safely behind the bars.

The history of the care of the mentally diseased shows a close relationship between the development of methods of treatment and the development of the hospital as an institution. The asylums or madhouses of American colonial days and of the corresponding period in Europe were generally little more than specialized jails. The inmates were often confined in chains and treated like wild animals. The activities of the Society of Friends are to a large degree responsible for the beginning of the change which has since taken place. A hospital designed to cure insane patients was opened in Philadelphia in 1752. The standards of the time are indicated by the fact that the insane were incarcerated in the cellar.<sup>8</sup>

A few other institutions for the mentally diseased were established before the end of the eighteenth century, and methods quite humane in comparison with the earlier were employed. The movement to hospitalize the insane, thus aus-

<sup>7</sup> Deutsch, Albert, *The Mentally Ill in America*, 1937, p. 64.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

piciously begun, received a severe setback as a result of the epidemic of poorhouse building which swept across the United States in the early part of the nineteenth century. The poorhouse, appearing in almost every State, tended to supersede the hospital as an institution for the care of the insane. Obviously the poorhouse could offer nothing but wretched custodial care; treatment was impossible. This period was distinctly retrogressive so far as provisions for the mentally diseased are concerned.

In the second quarter of the century arose and flourished the belief that mental disease could be cured in practically every case, if proper treatment were given. Though intended to help the insane, this notion harmed them, because of the disappointments inevitably following the discovery that cures were far less common than promised. Genuine help for the insane did not come until the energetic activity of Dorothea Lynde Dix (1802-1877) had begun to impress the public with the barbarity and futility of current methods of dealing with persons mentally ill. Through her influence, St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D. C., was established, and a number of States modernized and expanded their provisions for the care of the insane.

Since that time there has been continuous, if somewhat irregular, progress in dealing with the mentally diseased. The State-operated hospital has come to be the accepted form of institution. About half the States now have this type of system; a few have county hospitals; others have no well-defined plan.<sup>9</sup> Psychiatry, for many years a much neglected field of medicine, came into its own following the beginning of the mental hygiene movement. This movement owes its inception to the efforts of Clifford Beers, who, in 1908, published "A Mind That Found Itself." The book is an autobiographical account of Beers' experience in an asylum for the insane. It aroused great public interest in the fate of the insane and thus prepared the way for the acceptance of the mental hygiene movement sponsored by Beers. The National Committee for Mental Hygiene, organized in 1909, has ever since functioned actively and successfully in the promotion of mental health. The nature of

<sup>9</sup> Deutsch, Albert, *The Mentally Ill in America*, 1937, p. 271.

mental disease is, as a result, much better understood; psychiatry has taken its rightful place as a branch of medicine; and the techniques of care and treatment have been vastly improved.

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## JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

FROM the fact that small, homogeneous groups are able to maintain a high degree of immunity to internal conflict without anything recognizable as formal organization or control, we may infer that early societies had little crime. In the absence of contact with socially divergent societies, unapproved forms of behavior seldom or never entered the individual's mind as a course open to him in the solution of his problems. He acted in accordance with the standards of his group, standards unanimously accepted, because no other way ever occurred to him as a possibility. In this manner, his behavior was controlled in the interests of the group without arousing in his mind the feeling that he was being coerced into conformity contrary to his personal desires. The notion that the welfare of the group and of the individual are not always identical would probably have appeared strange to him.

The improvement of techniques, economic and communicative, has brought most of humanity far away from this condition of primitiveness and isolation. We of modern societies have lost the unanimity of the past. In our groups are sub-groups and sub-sub-groups, out of the highly specialized experiences of which the members develop new attitudes, differing strongly from group to group. Out of this condition, conflicts arise which tend to break up and destroy society. The action of the aggressor in the conflict is judged antisocial, cognizance is taken of it, and crime has arrived. In order that the larger unity may prevail and in order that confusion may be avoided, we have set up certain minimum standards of social behavior, conformity to which we insist upon from every member of the group. These minimum standards, formally stated, constitute our laws. Mere obedience to the law is not the most highly approved level

of social behavior; rather it is the lowest limit, the requirement made of all. Thus the law forbids us to take our neighbor's life, but we are under no legal obligation to treat him kindly. As a means of securing the desired conformity, we have created an incentive, namely, punishment, which is designed to express the attitude of the group toward the offender and to offset the incentives that might otherwise lead to violations of the law. With the operation of the system thus established we are all more or less familiar. Indeed, it is the assumption of the law that everyone knows what the law requires. An intricate organization of legislatures, courts, police, and prisons undertakes to formulate and enforce the law. Its partial failure gives rise to the problem of crime, probably the most difficult of all the social problems found currently in the United States.

Realizing, as we now do, that human behavior, bad as well as good, is determined by various elements of the social environment, we have recently begun in serious fashion to deal with the problem of crime by way of prevention. Obviously, this is the only way of arriving at anything approaching permanency in the solution. A great change in attitude toward the persons who commit crimes has had to take place before preventive measures could be undertaken. This change has not yet reached all the people, nor does it extend to all persons defined as criminals. It has, however, gained sufficient strength in the public mind to permit the application of some sociological techniques to the treatment of juvenile offenders and to the modification of the social environments in which children must live. Under the friendly protection of the changed attitude, the study of delinquent behavior among children has proceeded rapidly. In the last twenty years, there has been accumulated a large body of the findings of research in this field, on the basis of which a technique of treatment has been worked out. Owing to factors in the situation not yet fully understood, this technique is at some points faulty. However, it represents our first accomplishment in the field of criminology thus far and is of much greater importance because of its potential value than its present degree of success indicates. We hope some day to ex-

tend this method to the treatment of all persons, young and old, who show a tendency to become delinquent.

#### JUVENILE DELINQUENCY—EXTENT

The meagerness of statistical information on the subject makes it impossible to discover accurately the number of delinquent children. According to the report of the Delinquency Committee of the White House Conference of 1930, the number of children dealt with by the courts on delinquency charges exceeds 200,000 per year for the United States.<sup>1</sup> The United States Children's Bureau estimates that in the area from which it has secured data, about one child in every one hundred appears in court annually.<sup>2</sup> Of the 554,376 arrests reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for 1938, 18,528 were of persons 16 years of age or less and 17,276 were of persons aged 17.<sup>3</sup> Besides these, large numbers of children are warned by the police or are arrested and subsequently released without trial. This group is probably much larger than that handled by the courts.

Only a comparatively small portion of the total number is sent to institutions. So-called training schools are now maintained by all the States, many of them having more than one unit. Yet the total inmate population of these schools is not greatly in excess of 30,000. Considerable inequality in the proportionate number of juveniles committed to institutions has been observed for the several States. In general, the agricultural areas have the lowest rates. Figures secured from juvenile courts reporting to the Children's Bureau give some information as to the trend in juvenile delinquency, which appears to be without significant variations. There is no indication that the amount of juvenile delinquency will change greatly in the immediate future. It may be noted, however, that on the basis of reports from 28 courts in 17 States the Children's Bureau has

<sup>1</sup> *The Delinquent Child*, 1932, pp. 228-9.

<sup>2</sup> United States Children's Bureau, *Facts About Juvenile Delinquency*, Bureau Publication No. 215, 1932, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Reports*, Vol. IX, No. 4, 1939.

found an increase in juvenile delinquency of 11 per cent for 1937 over 1936.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JUVENILE DELINQUENT

Although most State laws permit charging with crime individuals as young as seven years, a disposition has been noted recently to raise the lower limit to ten years. The juvenile court age is ordinarily given as ten to seventeen, but this is only a convenient figure, since the States vary greatly in the age limits set for eligibility to the juvenile courts. Statistics on the age of offenders are, therefore, of little value. In general, the number of children charged with delinquency increases from the first year the children are old enough to come to court until the last year they are admitted. Quite possibly the difference is almost entirely due to the disposition of the police to arrest the older offender and let the younger ones go.

Boys are adjudged delinquent five or six times as frequently as girls. Negro children of both sexes have a much higher delinquency rate than white children.<sup>4</sup> The most common charges made against boys are stealing and acts of carelessness or mischief, whereas girls are more often charged with running away, incorrigibility, and sex offenses. As the juvenile group becomes older, the offenses charged resemble more and more those found in adults. About half of the boys and one third of the girls are recidivists.

#### CAUSAL FACTORS

The day is not so far in the past when human behavior, especially behavior to which moral judgments are attached, was regarded as the product of the individual's will. The individual could choose to do good or he could choose to do evil; his selection was supposedly based upon his own inner qualities, which were held to be relatively independent of the social situation. It was recognized that the social environment might to

<sup>4</sup> See United States Children's Bureau, *Juvenile-Court Statistics, Year Ended December 31, 1934*, and *Federal Juvenile Offenders, Year Ended June 30, 1935*, Bureau Publication No. 235, 1937.

some degree influence behavior, otherwise the activities of missionaries and teachers must have been considered futile, but an individual found among bad companions was ordinarily believed to have chosen them deliberately and consequently to be himself responsible for any evil influence they might have upon him. The individual was held strictly accountable for his acts and their consequences.

Since the beginning of the present century, there has been a marked change in the explanations of behavior accepted by psychologists and sociologists. The idea of personal responsibility has been given up entirely as of no value in explanation and of little in control. In its place are recognized individual factors such as physique and mentality, and social factors such as family and community life. Behavior is not an entity but a function of the individual and the environment. It has been recognized also that an individual's acts depend to a considerable extent upon his experiences, from which it is clear that behavior tendencies can be radically changed through changes in the social environment.

The acceptance of this form of explanation makes possible a new way of understanding delinquent behavior, which is, after all, much like any other kind of behavior. For all behavior, bad and good, consists of a series of attempts by the individual to secure a more satisfactory adjustment to his surroundings. Socially, a good adjustment requires the gratification of certain desires involving relationships with other persons. How these desires originate is a question not yet completely answered, but if we accept their existence in culture as a fact, the explanation of their transference to the individual offers no difficulty. People can learn how to feel in a given situation, how to think as well as how to act. Recognition of the need for food becomes, by the act of recognition, a wish. Even before the individual knows that he has such a wish, its periodic gratification introduces the ministrations of the mother or nurse, a repeated series of situations in which food plays a part and consequently comes to be expected. Its absence would be recognized with a feeling of loss and longing, identical with the wish. Furthermore,

long before the individual can speak, he has learned to transfer the wish for food to a wish for the attention of the persons who supply it to him. The steps from this situation to the fully developed desires for social approval are short and inevitable. They are taken by every normal person while he is still a young child. The desire for social approval soon comes to be, if it is not from the beginning of social life, the most important fact for the explanation of motivation. There are, to be sure, many forms of social approval and many different individual notions as to what constitutes social approval, but always the desire for it will be found motivating behavior.

From this point of view, action is seen as the purposeful pursuit of a goal. The individual's behavior patterns or habits are the techniques whereby he seeks to gratify his wish for social approval in some form or other. His technique may be poor, so that the results of his efforts are unsatisfactory, in which case he feels thwarted and defeated. Or his notion of social approval may lead him to seek status in a criminal gang, in which case even his success is at least a partial failure from society's viewpoint. In the first case, the individual becomes maladjusted because he cannot gratify his desires. In the second case, he becomes maladjusted because the objective of his desires is not in accord with the generally accepted standard.

It happens not infrequently that when the individual does not succeed in gaining his ends by socially approved methods he will try others. If these are against the law, he will be adjudged delinquent as soon as his actions are discovered. It may also happen that he has learned and practiced criminal techniques from the beginning, in which case, also, he will be regarded as delinquent by society as soon as he is found out.

The first concern of the sociologist in attempting to discover why some but not all persons resort to illegal behavior is to isolate the significant factors in the situation, ordinarily spoken of as causes. Since behavior is seen as a function of the individual and the environment, the causal factors must be found in the relationships between the two. The separation of causes into individual and social factors is quite arbitrary and is

justified only as a matter of convenience in dealing with them. Thus the unfitness of the red-headed boy in the social group may be just as logically spoken of as the unfitness of the social environment for the red-headed boy. With this explanation a presentation of the causal factors may be undertaken without creating a misunderstanding as to their nature.

#### PHYSICAL TRAITS AS CAUSAL FACTORS

In order to function successfully in society, the individual must possess physical equipment adequate for the purpose. If he hears or sees poorly, he may fail to measure up to the standard of performance set for him. Often neither he nor his group may realize that his senses are defective. Since no allowance is made for his handicaps, he may become discouraged by his failures; he may find life so uncomfortable in school that he can no longer endure it. He stays away and becomes a truant, a delinquent. Since the individual's sensory defect appears to be the condition most directly connected with his turning to delinquent behavior, we regard it as the cause. If he had been normal in this respect, he would probably have made a normal adjustment to the demands of the situation. Once more it should be mentioned that the social environment which fails to take account of individual differences, such as poor sight and hearing, may just as logically be considered the cause of delinquency as the defect itself.

Failures leading to delinquent behavior may be due to a variety of physical abnormalities in addition to those mentioned. The cripple, who cannot win the esteem of his playmates through physical prowess, may steal money to buy candy for them. Any individual who is physically so different from the other members of his group as to be conspicuous, whether it be because of his size, features, or any other trait, is likely to be made unduly self-conscious, a state which readily manifests itself in peculiar behavior. This is especially likely to be the case if the abnormality is regarded by the group as a mark of inferiority.

## MENTALITY

A minimum of mental capacity is absolutely necessary to the individual's acquisition of the personality traits requisite to modern social life. The simpler the environment, the smaller the degree of intelligence required. It sometimes happens, therefore, that a connection can be observed between low mental capacity or feeble-mindedness and delinquency. The same is true of mental disease. Derangements of the mind result in errors of perception and reasoning and in loss of the powers of inhibition, which are rather frequently expressed in delinquent behavior. It is not true, however, that mental or physical abnormalities invariably result in delinquency, nor that their absence confers immunity. Under favorable circumstances, satisfactory adjustment can be made in spite of almost any individual abnormality.

## PERSONALITY

The individual's personality, although the product of his experience, is so intimately a part of him that a discussion of its relation to behavior seems, in some respects, to belong to the individual, not to the social factors. Resulting from the operation of a unique experience upon a unique organism, every individual acquires a set of personality traits or habits, themselves unique. These traits may have been developed in a narrow, circumscribed environment, differing fundamentally from the general environment. For example, a child raised in a home where his slightest wish has always been anticipated and gratified with no effort whatever on his part, is likely to find himself sadly maladjusted when at last he is forced by circumstances to face the world. By habit he has come to have numerous desires, but his experiences have not provided him with the means or techniques of gratifying them in ways acceptable to the world. In his search for a solution, he may engage in delinquent behavior.

This outcome is all the more likely if, as part of his habits, he has learned to think of crime as an interesting and rather



common form of behavior. His experiences may have given him much contact with crime—through magazines, movies, or delinquent companions. His resistance to undertaking criminal activities may be very slight or even totally lacking.

#### SOCIAL FACTORS

Certain features of the social environment are more likely than others to condition the individual in such a way as to induce in him delinquent behavior. These features are treated here as the social factors making for delinquency. First in importance among these factors is the broken home. The home, in spite of the numerous changes it has undergone (see Chapter 3), still provides the social environment for the individual during his most impressionable years. There he learns or fails to learn the fundamental demands of social life. Any failure on the part of the home to play its full rôle in this respect is reflected in the personal traits of the children reared therein. They go out into the world ill prepared for the conflicts in which they must inevitably engage.

Our measure of the effect of the home on juvenile delinquency is made by noting the number of delinquents coming from "broken" homes, that is, homes not composed of father, mother and their children living together. Not all homes which include both parents are ideal, nor are all widows incapable of providing adequate home training for their children, but the probabilities seem to be in favor of the unbroken home as against the broken home as a favorable social environment from the point of view here taken. Statistics bearing on the home life of delinquent children are therefore of significance. According to the investigations of the United States Children's Bureau,<sup>5</sup> about 36 per cent of 66,651 children charged with delinquency in the juvenile courts in 1934 came from broken homes. Girls show a greater dependence upon the home than boys, the proportion of delinquent girls from broken homes being above the average. According to Shaw and McKay,

<sup>5</sup> *Juvenile-Court Statistics, Year Ended December 31, 1934, and Federal Juvenile Offenders, Year Ended June 30, 1935*, Bureau Publication No. 235, 1937.

however, this factor as a cause of juvenile delinquency has been greatly overrated.<sup>6</sup>

### THE SCHOOL

The school is second only to the home in its opportunity to shape the personalities of children. Consequently, it ranks next to the home in its relation to delinquent behavior. Its treatment of the child is, however, in many ways the exact opposite to that of the home. In the home the child is treated as an individual. His position as a person is assured him in every way. He has a place at the table, a bed and possibly a room of his own, and numerous private possessions. Ordinarily, his wants receive immediate attention. The family activities are planned with his welfare in mind. In the school he is but one of many. His special wishes receive little attention. The group is the unit, and he is expected to submerge himself in it. The blow to his ego may be severe, and if he has received no preparation for the new situation, he may fail in making adaptation to it. If the failure is complete, if no satisfactory group relationships of any kind are attained, the individual cannot endure the school environment. Unadjustment to the school environment is taken so seriously by the modern community that the individual who can no longer continue in it is defined as a delinquent. Many forms of partial failure may also be defined. The large, stupid boy may attempt to compensate for his low status in the classroom by attacking his smaller schoolmates on the playground. Or the boy who cannot learn to spell may attract attention by misbehaving. The large proportion of truancy, running away, and mischief in the list of juvenile offenses indicates the extent to which maladjustment in school may lead to delinquent behavior.

### POVERTY

The vague term poverty often appears on lists of social factors involved in delinquency. Its effects are probably much less

<sup>6</sup> Shaw, C. R. and McKay, H. D., "Are Broken Homes a Causative Factor in Juvenile Delinquency?" *Social Forces*, Vol. 10, No. 4, May, 1932, pp. 514-24.

significant than commonly supposed, and nearly always indirect. The vast majority of children grow up in poor homes. Most of them are as law-abiding as the children of the high-income groups. It is true, however, that some of the effects of poverty are conducive to delinquency. The family with an extremely low income has comparatively little choice in the location of its residence. It must live where the rents are within reach. This means, often enough, that the poor family lives in the slum, where criminals also live, where playgrounds are few, and where wholesome social leadership is lacking. Moreover, the poor family must occupy a small house, sometimes too small to afford the comfort and privacy requisite to the development of self-respecting personality. It is not surprising that in these circumstances children are not properly fitted for the world.

#### COMMUNITY INFLUENCES

By the term "community influences" is meant those social conditions, some of which are present in almost every community, which tend to develop in children attitudes favorable toward delinquency. Among such conditions may be mentioned the existence of organized criminal gangs, the prevalence of gambling and vice resorts, unsupervised dance halls and road-houses, lack of recreational facilities, and lack of economic opportunity for young people. Any child who, by the force of circumstances, falls victim to influences of this character is likely thereby to find himself trained for delinquency.

A relation is also noted between early employment and delinquency, working children showing a higher rate of court appearance than the nonworking group. This relationship is probably not causal in the ordinary sense, but lies in the fact that child labor and delinquency are the results of common factors, which makes them vary together. Thus the conditions which force a child into industry while he is still very young include poor home environment, inadequate education, and failure in school, all of which are in themselves conducive to delinquency as well as to child labor.

## TREATMENT

The new conception of delinquency, the realization that it is the product of the social situation, calls for new methods of treatment. Under this conception, it is no longer possible to handle the offender as if he had deliberately chosen to follow evil ways. We have discovered that to "blame" the individual through condemnation and punishment is merely to add another large item to the already unfavorable social situation in which the delinquent is involved, thereby decreasing the chances of his recovery to acceptable behavior. We find it difficult, however, to shed the ancient attitudes of anger, fear, and resentment that have played so large a part in our treatment of delinquency in the past. In spite of the acceptance of newer principles, we still retain much that is old in the machinery we have set up for dealing with delinquent children. We cannot give up completely the notion that a violation of the law is a crime and that the criminal must be punished. Consequently our juvenile courts, probation systems, and institutions for juveniles are often curious mixtures of the old and the new, sometimes approaching the ideal of the new, sometimes sinking back to a condition not far different from that of corresponding agencies designed for criminals in general.

## THE JUVENILE COURT

We need not go far back in history to reach a time when children who violated the law were treated with the same severity as adult criminals. Long prison sentences, transportation, and even the death penalty were imposed upon young children in Western civilization as recently as a hundred years ago. The beginnings of a change in the practice came when the law exempted the younger children from responsibility for their actions on the ground of immaturity. In most States, at present, children under fourteen can be convicted only if the prosecution can prove that the offender understood the illegal and wrongful character of the act designated as criminal. But mere exemption from responsibility did not provide a satisfac-

tory substitution for older methods as a means of dealing with offenders. This came with the establishment of the juvenile court, the first one being that of Chicago, founded in 1899. Juvenile courts are now operating in all but two of the States.<sup>7</sup>

The juvenile court introduced into society an entirely new principle, namely, the focusing of attention upon the individual instead of upon the offense. In the ordinary criminal court, the defendant's personal qualities are of no moment. Evidence reflecting upon his character or his past actions, excepting only those directly connected with the offense, may not be introduced by the prosecution. The jury must determine as well as it can what manner of man the defendant is by the evidence bearing upon one specific act, which may have occupied only a few minutes. Only rarely is the jury in a position to exercise any choice with respect to the treatment to be accorded to the defendant. If he committed the act as charged, he must be found guilty, even though it may be evident that he will never commit an offense again. The defendant having been found guilty, the judge has no choice but to sentence him according to the law, which often allows but little variation in penalty. Throughout the whole proceeding, attention is centered upon the offense rather than upon the offender. Even in the determination of guilt, which this method is designed to secure, the socially desirable result is not always obtained. No officials are present whose business it is to elicit the truth. The prosecuting attorney wants to win the case; so also does the attorney for the defense. The judge can do nothing more than to conduct the trial according to the rules; the jury, which might be interested in discovering the truth, can ask no questions. The result is a battle of wits between opposing lawyers in which considerations of social welfare are completely submerged.

The juvenile court is not technically a criminal court at all. Strictly speaking, no trials are conducted there. The question of guilt or innocence, as it applies to the commission of a par-

<sup>7</sup> United States Children's Bureau, *Facts About Juvenile Delinquency*, Bureau Publication No. 215, 1932, p. 30.

ticular offense, is of minor significance. The offender is treated as a ward of society whose social environment is of such a character as to necessitate society's intervention on his behalf. In order that the intervention may be of the right sort, the court must investigate all matters which will throw light on the behavior tendencies of the individual. Physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social investigators, attached to the court, examine the individual and his social environment according to their several specialties. As much as possible is discovered about the individual from himself. His physical condition, his mentality, his personality traits, his own report of his life experiences, are all made a part of the record. His parents, playmates, teachers, and employers are interviewed for the information they may be able to give. On the basis of all the information collected, the judge makes disposition of the case.

#### PROBATION

In the majority of the cases, the offender is placed on probation. This means that he remains under the protection and supervision of the court for a specified period, in charge of a probation officer who is attached to the court and is directly responsible to the judge for the proper performance of his duties. The probation officer, ideally, is a man or woman trained and fitted to guide children. He should become personally acquainted with his charges, learn their difficulties and help them make the necessary adjustments. In practice, the ideal is not always attained. Sometimes the appointment to the position of probation officer is determined by political affiliations, rather than by fitness for the work. Often the number of cases assigned to the individual officer is so large that he cannot possibly become acquainted with all of them, not to mention visiting them in their homes at frequent intervals. In such instances, supervision dwindles to the formality of requiring the probationers to write a letter once a week to the probation officer. Even this is better than nothing, but naturally the effectiveness of the treatment is lost, and it is not surprising that many children so supervised get into difficulties again.

The requirement of a weekly letter does not introduce sufficient influence into the social situation greatly to change the behavior patterns therein developed.

#### INSTITUTIONS FOR JUVENILES

Inevitably, some young delinquents appear who are so completely unadjusted that their return to the community is inadvisable. Some form of delinquency may have become so ingrained in their habits that the slightest opportunity for its exercise will serve as a stimulus. Or the acts likely to be committed are of so serious a character that the safety of the community demands that the offender be confined. The older "reformatories" for juveniles served this latter purpose and the additional one of inflicting punishment. There still remains a tendency for them to be administered after the fashion of prisons. Routine, regimentation, and corporal punishments are still too frequently utilized, but as the real purpose in the new scheme of treatment for juveniles becomes more generally known, these relics of the past tend to disappear.

The use of special institutions for juvenile offenders has greatly increased since the beginning of the present century. Most of the increase probably results from public acceptance of the principle that children should not be subjected to the contaminating influence of contact with adult criminals. Though at first the change meant nothing more than the establishment of a separate prison for juveniles, it was the beginning of a new form of institutional care, designed to rehabilitate the inmates rather than to exact penalties. The pattern of organization has become that of the school instead of that of the penitentiary.

#### FOSTER HOMES

In some cases, foster homes have proved satisfactory for the care of juvenile delinquents. If the foster parents have a genuine interest in the child's welfare, combined with extensive knowledge of child behavior and its control, successful place-

ments may be made. Boarding homes appear to yield better results than free homes. Too often the free home is unsatisfactory because of the tendency of the foster parents to expect their wards to pay for their keep and the trouble they occasion by working. The difficulty of equating the values of board and work, together with the belief of the children that they have no word in the bargain, is likely to lead to misunderstandings and feelings of injustice. The children involved often try to meet the difficulty by running away.

#### INSTITUTIONS FOR TEMPORARY CARE

Frequently enough, the police arrest a juvenile delinquent for whom no home is at once available. The child may be a runaway, or his home may be of such a character that he should not be returned there, or the child may be one who cannot be trusted at large. The necessary investigation and arrangements for hearing the case take time, even under the most favorable circumstances. During this period, the child must somehow be kept in a place where he is properly cared for and from which he can be brought to court. The necessities of the case demand an institution of detention where juveniles can be detained until their difficulties are more or less definitely disposed of. In the past, the county or city jail usually served this purpose, and in some places the jail continues so to be used. Small communities, with only a few juveniles requiring detention, find the expense of maintaining a separate institution prohibitive. Consequently, such institutions are much less common in small communities than in large ones. Even in the larger cities the problem of segregating the various kinds of children who must be detained has not been fully solved.

A fairly satisfactory substitute for the institution is the private boarding home. It can be made available where a special detention home cannot be provided. Many of the smaller communities have begun to use this method, but the jail is still resorted to, especially when the offender is believed to be dangerous.



## MINORS ABOVE JUVENILE COURT AGE

A special problem is created by a large group of offenders who, though above the age at which juvenile court jurisdiction stops (usually 16 years) are nonetheless more nearly like children than adults and, consequently, are fit subjects for the juvenile type of treatment. In most communities no special provision is made for them. They are treated like adults, tried and, if convicted, sent to prison with ordinary criminals. A disposition to change this practice is seen in the tendency to deal more leniently with the youthful offender. Provisions are becoming more and more frequent for placing such persons under probation, giving them suspended sentences or sending them to special reformatories or prisons. A number of States and cities have established special courts other than the juvenile court for hearing cases of minors. It appears that ultimately the methods of the juvenile court will be adopted for all persons under the age of twenty-one, and possibly for first offenders above this age.

## ADULTS RESPONSIBLE FOR JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Unprincipled adults are occasionally apprehended for contributing to the delinquency of children. Sometimes they teach children to steal; sometimes they merely encourage stealing by buying the stolen goods. In other instances they sell liquor, drugs, guns, or other harmful objects to children. Or they engage in sex delinquencies involving young boys or girls. According to the ordinary practice, such individuals are tried in the criminal courts. The charges are often of grave character and the defendant may need all the safeguards guaranteed him by the constitution. Unfortunately, this procedure requires the attendance of children as witnesses. To appear as complaining witness in a trial of this sort may be almost as damaging to the character of the witness as if he were the defendant. Juvenile courts have therefore sought jurisdiction over such cases, in order to protect the children involved. In many cases this can be done satisfactorily, but instances are certain to arise in which

the defendant demands the public jury trial, conducted according to the established form. In such a case the public appearance of the child witness is inevitable. The most that can be hoped for in situations of this kind is that the court will protect the child as much as possible.

#### PREVENTION

Any program of treatment of juvenile delinquency which does not include as its most important part a program of prevention can be justified only as an emergency measure. Treatment without prevention is at best only palliative; its work is never done; it contributes but little that is of lasting benefit to society. A program of prevention gives promise of a time when reformatories will be less, rather than more, in evidence. It looks forward to the day when the social environment will be so constituted as to develop well-adjusted, law-abiding citizens out of the children who are subjected to it.

Such a program of prevention must be based upon a knowledge of the causal factors at work in the production of delinquency. Though much remains yet to be learned, the studies of recent years have progressed far enough to permit the undertaking of a widespread attack upon these factors. This attack includes as one of its first objectives the education of the public as to the practicability of the juvenile court methods and the ultimate value of prevention. Since the money for operating courts, detention homes, probation, and other portions of the machinery of treatment must come from taxes, a favorable public opinion is absolutely essential.

The second objective is improvement of the home. Recognizing the part played by unsatisfactory home life in causing delinquency, the program of prevention aims at building up the home so that it will turn out well-adjusted individuals instead of delinquents. Some of the requirements, such as economic security and an income above the poverty level, appear to be beyond the possibility of attainment. Others, such as education of the parents in child care and training, may be reached through the activities of agencies now in operation.

The United States Children's Bureau and a number of other public and private agencies can do a great deal along this line. Special assistance to parents can be provided in the form of habit clinics and child guidance clinics, where behavior problems can be recognized and dealt with long before they reach so serious a stage as to be defined as delinquency.

The school has also been selected as a field of operations by the exponents of prevention. Provisions for medical and mental examinations, and special care for the maladjusted without stigmatizing them as inferior, have been advocated and are slowly coming into practice. These methods enable the school to discover the peculiarities of the individual and to make it possible to provide him with the individual treatment his peculiarities demand.

Finally to be dealt with are the various influences that emanate from the community itself. Commercialized amusements such as dance halls, roadhouses, gambling joints, and moving picture theaters, may, unless properly controlled, lead many of their youthful patrons into delinquency. Well-enforced legislation to keep these enterprises in bounds is an important part of the program of prevention, but the negative aspect of amusement control is not enough. The community must provide competition for harmful activities through parks, playgrounds, libraries, museums, and public entertainments, all so attractive that the children will prefer them to socially disapproved activities. Opportunities for education, for vocational training, and, finally, for work at a decent wage must also be provided, if the temptation to delinquency is to be circumvented. This last, like a living wage for the family breadwinner, cannot be attained by a process of education as we now understand it. Upon contemplation, the problem of delinquency becomes incredibly large. The complete prevention of it appears impossible; the most we can hope for is a considerable reduction.

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## CRIME

THE preceding chapter has dealt with the problem of treating and preventing delinquency, especially among children. Behavior was regarded as the product of the social environment, hence beyond the individual's power of choice. Society was held responsible for the behavior patterns produced in its members and, consequently, in duty bound to provide the individual from birth with a proper environment or, failing in this, to correct the personalities of those individuals who have been given a wrong start in life. If the principles for treating and preventing juvenile delinquency could be put into general practice, we should theoretically have little trouble with adult criminals, but we do not seem to be able to go far in this direction.

One of the reasons for our failure is doubtless to be found in the fact that criminal behavior is so firmly established in our folkways that we cannot present a united front against it. According to Sutherland,<sup>1</sup> the prevalence of white-collar crime in America is related to the existence of criminal practices in almost every white-collar occupation, practices which are learned, along with the regular techniques, by those who enter these occupations. Accepted by many people as unobjectionable and by many more as inevitable, criminal behavior manifested in connection with a profession arouses but little public disapproval. The victims are so often weaker in social influence than the criminals that their protests count for nothing.

There exists, consequently, a large criminal population of adults who prey on society more or less throughout the active period of their lives. However desirable it might be to give

<sup>1</sup> See Sutherland, Edwin H., "White-Collar Criminality," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, February, 1940, pp. 1-12.

these persons the careful individual treatment which might restore them to law-abiding society, the circumstances render such a course practically impossible. They are adults, equipped with set habits, difficult to change. They resist all obvious efforts to reform them. Their adjustments are so firmly fixed and their social connections are so extensive that to alter them would require virtually a complete shift of personality. Moreover, this criminal population is a part of the social order, with powerful social influences at its command, itself exercising considerable control over the direction of social action. To catch and convict an occasional offender from this group does no good. The only recourse seems to be the adoption of the best defensive measures we can contrive, in order to make life tolerable while we continue the process of education for social responsibility, which we hope will ultimately eliminate criminality from our culture.

#### COST OF CRIME

The most obvious effect of crime is its huge cost in terms of money. The vast majority of crimes are economic, that is, they are motivated by the desire to acquire money or other property in some manner contrary to law. Non-economic crimes, such as assaults and murders, are often incidental to attempts at burglary or robbery. Every time an economic crime is successfully perpetrated, property is taken from its owners, who are thus deprived of the products of their industry or business activity. In the aggregate, the losses sustained amount to enormous sums.

Statistics on the costs of crime are, however, too meager to permit our giving the totals with accuracy. Innumerable small thefts are never reported to the police. We have become so accustomed to losses of this sort that we are not surprised when they occur and, consequently, are not disposed to do anything about it. We realize, moreover, that the police have so much to do already that they will not have time to concern themselves about the theft of a book or a hat or an umbrella. We have no figures on the total value of these relatively inexpensive articles

taken by thieves. We can only infer from the frequency of crimes of this character that the loss is large.

When the value of the stolen property is considerable, the victim usually reports the matter to the police, but since there is no systematic collection of the information presented, this adds little to our knowledge. Certain factors tend to cast doubt upon the accuracy of such figures as may be had. Police departments do not like the imputation of inefficiency which follows the publication of large losses from crime; on the other hand, some victims of crime greatly overstate the value of the property lost. There are, besides, at least a few economic crimes undiscovered by the victims. Successfully forged wills, embezzlements, adulterations, fraudulent security sales, fraudulent bankruptcies, and thefts of goods in small quantities from large stocks may be in this category. The persons affected may never know that the losses they have suffered were the result of crime. In other cases, the victim conceals his loss. If he has been swindled, for example, he may hesitate to admit what a fool he was. If he has lost money in a crooked gambling game, he may refuse to divulge his connection with such activities. If he has been robbed in a vice den, he will say nothing about it, lest his having been in such a place become public knowledge. In fact, his desire to keep facts of this sort secret gives opportunity for the crime of blackmail, one of the most difficult crimes to combat because of the reluctance of the victim to co-operate publicly in the prosecution.

It is safe enough to guess that the annual losses in the United States through these various forms of crime amount to many millions of dollars. If we include also the sums stolen from the public in the form of graft, smuggling, tax evasions, insurance frauds, and racketeering, we may be sure the total runs into billions.

In addition to the direct cost of crime, consisting of property taken from owners, there is also an indirect cost, made up of money spent in attempting to capture and imprison criminals and to prevent potential criminals from committing crimes. Several of the agencies of State and local governments are en-

gaged solely in combating crime. Most conspicuous among them is the army of traffic officers, policemen, detectives, sheriffs, constables, marshals, and guards, which must be kept constantly in the field. According to the census of 1930, over 170,000 persons are engaged in the occupations of law enforcement. This figure does not include the group classified as "guards, watchmen, and doorkeepers," numbering 148,000, or "lawyers, judges, and justices," numbering 160,000, many of whom are primarily law enforcement officers. The cost of operating the police systems of the United States for the year 1927 was more than a billion dollars.<sup>2</sup> The court system, housed in costly buildings, employs thousands of judges, clerks, bailiffs, and other officers. The State and Federal prison systems carry more than 12,000 persons on their payrolls.<sup>3</sup> The total expense of these systems reached \$39,308,350 for the year 1930.<sup>4</sup>

#### PRIVATE DEFENSE AGAINST CRIME

In spite of the huge systems of public law enforcement agencies existing in the United States, citizens find it necessary to supplement the activities of these agencies with private police, detectives, spies, guards, and watchmen. Every large business establishment has to keep persons employed for the purpose of preventing crimes by its employees or patrons. The conducting of business transactions of every kind is complicated by the necessity for guarding against cheating. The intricate systems of checks and counter checks found in accounting practice is designed primarily to prevent embezzlement. The cash register, the railway conductor's punch, the street car conductor's bell, all exist to prevent employees and others from pocketing the proceeds of the business. Furthermore, individuals who have movable property of any description are forced to keep it under lock and key. Practically every door is equipped with a lock, a great expense in the aggregate, for there are millions of doors in the United States. Safes, armored cars, guns, and

<sup>2</sup> Ettinger, Clayton J., *The Problem of Crime*, 1932, p. 260.

<sup>3</sup> United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Prisoners in State and Federal Prisons and Reformatories, 1929 and 1930*, p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.



burglar alarms add their comparatively small portion to the total cost of crime. This cost we do not know. It has been estimated at \$15,000,000,000 per year, and even this great figure is quite possibly an underestimate.

#### COST TO HUMAN HAPPINESS

To attempt to translate into economic terms the loss to human happiness caused by murders, assaults, and emotional shocks due to threats of harm is futile. No equivalent in property can be found for his life by the average individual. Many a man would gladly empty his pockets, if by so doing he could avoid the experience of being robbed. Nevertheless, it is obvious that among the costs of crime must be included the suffering endured by individuals who are, directly or indirectly, the victims of murder, rape, or assaults of any sort. Some 8,000 homicides are committed annually in the United States. Most of the persons killed have relatives who suffer intensely from the resulting personal loss. Though noneconomic in character, this loss cannot be disregarded.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CRIMINAL POPULATION

To gain an understanding of the nature of crime it is desirable to study the criminal. If we were in a position really to do so, we should be greatly helped in our efforts to apprehend and frustrate him. Quite naturally the criminal does not voluntarily submit to an investigation by persons who seek to destroy him. We are forced, therefore, to content ourselves with only an occasional glimpse into the real world of the criminal. For the most part we must rely for our information upon the criminals who fall into the hands of the police and who are, as a result, detained for a time in jail or prison.

Clearly the group of persons arrested does not include more than a small fraction of the total number of those who commit crimes. It includes at least a few innocent persons. The selective action of police activity is likely to result in the capture of the slow, the weak, the cowardly, the inept, the amateur, and the stupid. The individuals arrested, therefore, do not ac-

curately represent the criminal population. Information relating to this group cannot be applied to the criminal population as a whole without correction for the selective factors. We utilize this information because none better is available.

According to the Bureau of the Census,<sup>5</sup> there were on December 31, 1938, in the State and Federal prisons and reformatories a total of 159,818 prisoners. Of these, 154,383 were men; 5,435 were women. During the year 1938, there were 88,087 admissions to the institutions included in the report. Burglary and larceny, both economic crimes, constitute generally more than one third of the offenses for which convicts are sentenced. More than two thirds of the discharges are of convicts who have served less than two years. About 35 per cent of those convicted of homicide serve five years or more. Negroes show a commitment rate about three times as high as that of the whites; native whites show a rate about two and one-half times that of the foreign-born whites. The convict group averages much younger than the general adult population. Commitment ratios generally show the greatest number of commitments at the age of 19, and an almost equal number at 20. In the higher age groups, a gradual decline exists in the commitment ratios up to the age of 29, after which the decline is rapid.

Numerous studies of prison populations show the typical convict to be a rather poor specimen of the human race. He is smaller and lighter in weight than the average. He has little education, usually no vocational training, and no occupation other than unskilled labor. He comes from the lower social classes, possessing neither wealth nor position. Psychological tests show his mentality to be below the average; psychiatric examinations reveal psychotic tendencies. That these characteristics are truly indicative of the nature of the criminal population may be doubted, since they are all of the sort which would tend to result in the individual being captured, convicted, and kept in prison until the expiration of his term. About all we

<sup>5</sup> United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Prisoners in State and Federal Prisons and Reformatories: 1937*. (Newsrelease, October 14, 1939.)

can be reasonably sure of is that the typical criminal is a young man, but even this is of some value in the study of causation.

### CAUSAL FACTORS

To attempt an explanation of the vast and varied activities of the criminal population is to face a difficult task. Criminal behavior includes a good many varieties of action, determined by one or more of a variety of motives. In most instances, the adult criminal is only the juvenile delinquent grown up. He is more dangerous because he has more strength and skill; he is less amenable to treatment because he has become more set in his ways; otherwise he is the same. Something in the environment so influenced him that he commits crimes. His criminal behavior may be a form of compensation for inferiority or it may be a bid for recognition. It may be symptomatic of personal maladjustment, subjectively recognized for what it is. Unquestionably, many criminals are of this type. But there is also a large group, the members of which are not personally maladjusted in this sense. They do not feel themselves to be in the wrong. They know they are violating the law, but their consciences do not hurt them. They think illegal behavior is all right as long as they are not caught by the police. These are the most dangerous criminals, not only because of the cold-blooded and calculating manner in which they commit their crimes, but also because of the wide social influence they exercise. The shame and remorse and the sense of guilt which overwhelm the individual who knows he has done wrong is not a part of their reaction. They gloat over their success in criminal activities. The example they set becomes a powerful influence in the lives of all the members of the community. Our discussion of the causal factors will concern itself mainly with a description of those features of our culture which makes possible flagrant criminality of this sort.

### THE LAW

Primitive peoples do not regard law as man-made. Their explanation for its existence usually brings in a superhuman

agent, a Lawgiver, who in the distant past presented the people with a code of laws for their guidance. The law is thus beyond the power of men to change. Their duty is to obey and enforce it, to which end they must maintain courts and penal systems, but they have no use for a legislature. Edicts and decrees of the ruler are regarded not as legislative acts but as mere promulgations of the already existing law. It is only within the past several centuries that we have come to regard law as subject to human action. Now we consider it possible to enact into law any regulation whatsoever or to repeal any of those existing. Our legislative machinery provides an easy way of making changes. Even our constitutions, the most fundamental of all our laws, are subject to amendment. In fact, these constitutions themselves contain certain provisions for their own modification.

Modern life, with its ever-increasing complexity, requires a great deal of regulation. The city of the present could not operate if people did not conform to numerous rules of behavior. Confusion and conflict would inevitably follow any attempt on part of a large group to get along without such rules. It is to be expected, therefore, that as aggregations of population increase, the limitations imposed upon freedom of action by law will become more and more numerous. It is also possible that the very ease with which our legislative machinery works contributes to the multiplicity of laws now on the statute books. Congress and the State legislatures are in session a large part of the time. The thousands of bills they pass are increased by thousands more made into laws by city councils. Probably no individual in the United States knows the requirements of all the laws by which his behavior is limited. Most people are aware of only a few of the more important ones. Some of the laws, theoretically in force, have been long since forgotten. They are obsolete, unenforced, unknown. In special circumstances, some of these may be revived and enforced by zealous officials, to the consternation of persons who may have been ignorantly violating the forgotten laws.

This state of affairs is well calculated to develop among the

citizens of our country a set of attitudes decidedly favorable to crime. In the first place, we no longer believe in the infallibility of the law. We know it was made by human beings, quite as likely to make mistakes as ourselves. We do not respect the law as the expression of superhuman wisdom for the regulation of human affairs. In fact, our observation of the activities of legislative bodies often leads us to conclude that the law does not even express the degree of human wisdom that should properly be brought to bear on matters as important as the making of laws. Laws, therefore, have become divorced from the mores. 'The notion of inherent rightness does not cling to the behavior they enjoin. We may obey the law because we think it makes for a better community or because we are afraid of the consequences of disobedience, but we do not obey it because we think it is right that we should.

In the second place, we are so overwhelmed by laws that even with the best of intentions we cannot know and obey them all. Law enforcement is necessarily selective; so also is law obedience. How easy it is, under these conditions, to develop the attitude that one need only obey those laws which suit his purpose and convenience! Many laws are flouted even by the officials. Why should not the private citizen do likewise, making his own selection of laws to flout?

#### LAW AND CONFLICT

In a democracy, the majority rules. This means that one half the citizens plus one have the power to determine governmental policies and to pass laws restricting the behavior of the minority group without its formal consent. Actually, of course, the threat of potential revolt on part of large minorities keeps the majority within bounds; nonetheless the majority, since it has the armed forces of government at its command, can go far toward coercing minorities. The minority forced by such circumstances into submission does not respect the law embodying the will of the majority. Quite likely the citizens of the minority group will regard the laws in question as unjust, to be obeyed only if they cannot safely be disobeyed.

This attitude toward law has become prevalent in recent times as a result of the transfer of the class conflict from the informal arena of the mores to the halls of the legislatures and the courts. Here the various economic groups fight for laws to favor their special interests. They fight to saddle the tax burden upon their opponents and to appropriate the revenues for themselves. The winners in the conflict write the terms of capitulation into law, and the losers must pay. Neither the winners nor the losers emerge from the conflict with the feeling that the resultant legislation is really best for the country as a whole, although, to be sure, both sides in argument claim to represent the public. The losers may obey the laws thus produced as a part of good policy, but their attitude toward such laws is bound to be unfavorable to their continuance. These laws represent an enforced subjection to the will of a stronger group, motivated by selfishness, instead of just laws, fair to all.

The manner in which the conflict over laws is waged, when the facts become known, contributes further to the attitude of disrespect, which may become strong enough to be called resentment or contempt. Laws are, for the most part, made by representatives chosen by the people for the purpose. When the representatives do not vote in accordance with the will of the people who elected them, or when they plainly work for their private interests rather than the public good, the people feel frustrated and cheated. Sometimes a group can cheerfully accept defeat, if it feels that the fight was fairly fought; but if it feels that its loss is due to trickery, it cannot accept the outcome. Reports of graft, bribery, and corruption of every sort in government are current. Some of these are undoubtedly true. How is it possible for the citizenry to accept laws created under these conditions? It would appear that criminality is not nearly so difficult to explain as is the continued existence of large numbers of people who try to obey the law in spite of its defects.

## THE POLICE AND THE COURTS

The legislatures are not alone to blame for the lawlessness of America. The police and the courts also come in for a portion of the responsibility. It is a matter of common knowledge that the police share the general disrespect for law. They cannot enforce all the laws; consequently, they must make a selection. There is no scientific way of making such a selection. No matter how it is made, some persons are sure to be displeased. Often enough, it is made in response to demands of powerful interests or groups, which thereby get what they want. No policeman can respect a law which he must enforce simply because a powerful political group wants it enforced. He can hardly feel that he is working for the welfare of society. His energies, therefore, are likely to be directed only toward the capture of those criminals who have no social influence in the community. These individuals, when captured, feel that they have been discriminated against. They see persons whom they regard as much worse than themselves not only at large, but actually occupying high places in society. If, by chance, such an individual is arrested, he is usually soon free on bail or on a *habeas corpus* writ, quickly presented to a friendly judge by his lawyer.

At the trial, the defendant is more likely to win if he has a good lawyer than if he has to content himself with the counsel assigned him by the court. He knows of instances in which men in high places have stolen large sums and escaped punishment. He cannot help resenting a long sentence imposed upon him for what seems, by comparison, a trifling offense. Small wonder that he becomes a sworn enemy of all law, determined thenceforth to break the law at every opportunity.

So prevalent are the attitudes here described and so extensive is the illegal behavior resulting therefrom, that we are not far from wrong in saying that in our society illegal actions are normal. They are freely engaged in by persons who do not regard themselves as criminals and are not so regarded by others. But the line between acceptable illegal behavior and unaccept-

able illegal behavior is not clearly drawn. It differs for different individuals and groups. It makes up a wide area of human behavior in which choice of action is given no reliable guide. On the whole, it constitutes a milieu of criminality, in which the individual is readily induced to give over every motive except that of personal advantage and every rule of action except that of expediency.

#### SOCIETY'S WEAPONS—THE POLICE

If, after the foregoing description, we can still regard society as in some sense a unit, we may consider the means by which crime is opposed. Most of society's weapons against crime have been developed since the appearance of the large city, but their beginnings are observable among the most primitive people. Even in the simplest forms of culture are found rules with the force of law. There may be no body of men specially appointed to enforce the law, but every citizen is expected to do so. The members of the group serve as judge, jury, and executioners. The procedure follows well-recognized patterns for the various groups.

With the division of labor characteristic of civilization have come also the specialized agencies and occupations of law enforcement. Foremost among these in the war on crime are the police, the men whose chief business it is to capture the individual criminal and bring him into custody. This invariably means a personal encounter between the criminal and the police, in which the latter are frequently called upon to risk their lives. With the development of criminal techniques, police techniques have changed to meet the new demands. No longer does the policeman carry a lantern and a rattle around the town at night, crying out at intervals "all's well." He is an athletic individual, well-armed, trained in the ways of handling desperate criminals. He may be provided with a motorcycle or automobile in order that he may give chase to criminals who attempt to escape. He may wear civilian clothes, so that he may be unrecognized as a policeman. Or he may be a specially trained or experienced person whose chief work is to



discover clues to crimes, in which the perpetrator is unknown as to identity or whereabouts. He may utilize the techniques of microscopy, of chemistry, of fingerprinting, or of ballistics.

In their most highly developed forms, the techniques of the police are adequate to meet the purposes for which they have been devised. Gangsters have no monopoly on armored cars, machine guns, and bombs; these may be used by the police with equal facility. Systems of communication, the most recent utilizing the short-wave radio, serve to organize the police of a given city so that they can be mobilized on short notice. The methods of the best detectives are unbelievably clever. Experts on counterfeiting, handwriting, forgery, and the tricks of criminals in general are almost never deceived. The most spectacular exploits of the detectives of fiction are matched, if not surpassed, by those of real life.

Unfortunately, the best techniques are not generally available, so that the average police force is comparatively inefficient. Mistaken policies of economy by city councils often curtail police activity. The low pay keeps intelligent men off the force. The uncertain tenure of the positions, owing to political interference, prevents the development of a professional police and lowers the morale. Lack of co-operation among the thousands of independent police forces in the United States—Federal, State, city, and county—keeps their efficiency low. The possible remedies are apparent from the symptoms of inadequacy. Better pay, security of tenure, and special training for the work are obvious necessities. But with all these supplied, the police of America would still be inefficient. They need also to be co-ordinated, preferably organized and controlled from a central station and by a central authority extending over the whole United States. For the police to be limited by State, county, and city boundaries is to handicap them too severely in their difficult task.

### THE COURTS

According to the method theoretically followed, the suspected individual who has been captured by the police is turned

over to another of society's agencies for combating crime, namely, the court. In practice, however, only a small portion of the total number of persons captured by the police are dealt with in this manner. If the police brought in every person they suspect of violating a law, it would be physically impossible for the courts to handle all the cases. Besides, many of the offenses are trivial; the police either overlook the matter or let the offenders go with a warning. A number of innocent persons fall into the hands of the police in raids or under circumstances which place them temporarily under suspicion. Such persons are usually freed as soon as the police discover their innocence. There remains, even after these subtractions, a large group of suspects whose guilt or innocence must be determined by judicial procedure.

The court is the mechanism through which this procedure is carried out. The institution, as found among us at present, is the descendant of earlier forms differing in many respects from modern courts. In medieval Europe, some of the courts were merely dueling places where litigants fought out their differences with dangerous weapons under a system of rules supposed to guarantee equality between the two sides. Other courts of the period were engaged in the determination of guilt through the infliction of ordeals upon the suspects. These methods of reaching decisions have changed considerably, but the fundamental pattern remains much the same. Court proceedings, as found in the United States, are still cast in the form of a conflict in which the two sides are represented by champions. These contend under a complicated system of rules umpired by the judge. The jury chooses the winner.

Some of the modifications imposed upon the earlier forms of court procedure originated in the desire of a citizenry, in process of overthrowing a monarchy, to protect itself against usurpations of power by the king. Since the judges were representatives of the king, it was feared that they might be prejudiced in the king's favor in criminal cases, where the offense was regarded as an offense against the state or the king. The judge was therefore shorn of his power and a jury set up

as a group representing the people to which the ultimate power of deciding guilt or innocence was given.

### THE JUDGE

As the courts are now organized in the United States, the several officers have certain well-defined functions to perform. The judge is the highest officer of the court. It is his duty to conduct the proceedings in an orderly and dignified manner. He supervises the selection of a jury and the presentation of evidence. The extremely complicated rules of evidence require a high degree of expertness on part of the judge for their proper enforcement. Much of the evidence which the attorneys desire to introduce may be inadmissible under the rules. If such evidence is admitted, it may be made the ground for an appeal, in which case the issue may have to be tried again from the beginning. By his rulings, his instructions to the jury, and his attitude as incidentally expressed, the judge may greatly influence the outcome of the trial. Under some conditions he may direct the jury to return a particular kind of verdict. The personal feelings and allegiances of judges are often evident in the statistical enumerations of the results of trials held in their respective courts. Sometimes they are placed in the position of having to decide whether or not they have prejudices in a given case, obviously a question upon which very few persons could decide impartially. The judge who recognizes his own prejudices might make allowances for them, but the one so prejudiced that he does not himself realize that he is prejudiced is dangerous to justice.

### THE LAWYERS

The lawyers representing the two sides carry on their share of the proceedings by attempting to persuade the jury of the merits of their respective sides. The prosecuting attorney, engaged by the state, inaugurates the trial by submitting sufficient evidence to the grand jury to convince that body that the suspect should be tried. The charge, formally stated, is called the indictment. The suspect, thus made defendant in the case, is then called to trial under the accusation set forth in this docu-

ment. In the trial the state's attorney presents evidence and argument designed to prove the defendant's guilt. To this end he interrogates witnesses in the presence of the judge and jury on matters pertaining to the case upon which they may have direct knowledge. Opposed to the state's attorney is the attorney for the defense. He attempts to refute the evidence presented by the state and to introduce evidence proving his client's innocence. Each attorney cross-examines the witnesses called by the other in order to show inconsistencies or inaccuracies in their testimony. Sometimes the attempt to discredit evidence by bullying and intimidating the witness is carried to such an extreme that he is scarcely more comfortable than the defendant. As a consequence, many persons have become so reluctant to testify in court that they would rather permit the criminal to go free than submit to the ordeal of the witness stand.

At the conclusion of the taking of evidence, the attorneys for both sides address the jury in pleas for their respective cases. Upon the degree of skill with which the functions of the lawyers are performed the outcome of the trial largely depends. If the state's attorney is an able, seasoned fighter, he has little difficulty in securing the conviction of a defendant whose counsel is young and inexperienced. On the other hand, the average state's attorney is no match for the cunning of the criminal lawyer who stands ready to utilize every trick and wile to free his client. The importance of securing a good attorney is clearly recognized by the professional criminal. Instances are known in which such criminals have retained lawyers in advance so as to be ready at once to take advantage of legal loopholes in the event of their activities being interfered with by the police. The public, seeing the system in operation, cannot fail to note that the actual guilt or innocence of the offender may be a secondary factor in determining the outcome of the trial. However, the only serious attempt to remedy the defect has been the creation of a new official, the public defender. It is the expectation of his proponents that the public defender will eliminate the inequality which exists between the public prosecutor and the counsel ordinarily assigned to defend the suspect

who is too poor to provide for his own defense. That miscarriage of justice may be thus prevented in many cases cannot be doubted, but the case of the clever, large-scale criminal remains where it has been. This individual needs no help from a public defender. With money he can hire the finest legal talent in the country. It would seem that in such cases something should be done to eliminate the disadvantage suffered by the public prosecutor. All of which indicates that there is something fundamentally wrong with the conflict pattern of our trials. They can give justice only when the parties are of approximately equal strength, which may often happen, but with too many exceptions to be satisfactory.

It is not hereby intended to blame the lawyers for all the evils of our trial system. Many of them are conscientious upholders of law and order. Nonetheless it is a fact that there are men in the American bar who have no truly social conception of their occupation. These men place the interests of their clients and of themselves above the interest of the public. It follows that many able lawyers, legally engaged in the practice of law, are among the strongest allies possessed by the professional criminal. The larger the theft or embezzlement, the more money there is available for the defense. The worse the criminal, in this respect, the better will be the defense and the more difficult the conviction. There can be no question but that this condition aids and encourages the criminal and breaks down respect for law and lawyers in the law-abiding population.<sup>6</sup>

### THE JURY

Originating as a guardian of hard-won public liberties, the jury has now become one of the means whereby the skillful criminal escapes the penalty for his offenses. The reluctance with which the ordinary citizen serves on the jury leaves available only those who are not influential enough to evade service and those to whom the small pay of jurors makes an economic appeal. From this group the lawyer selects jurors whose prejudices are likely to favor his client or whose familiarity with legal

<sup>6</sup> See Arnold, Thurman W., *The Symbols of Government*, 1935, Chapters 6 and 7.

matters is slight or whose level of intelligence is low. Even the most careful supervision by the judge cannot guarantee that a jury thus selected will decide the issue on its merits. A single individual may dominate the jury and determine its decision, or he may hold out against all the others and prevent a verdict being reached. In the latter case, the result is equal to a long continuance, a result much desired by the defense, since witnesses disappear or forget and public interest in the case lapses with the passage of time. A professional jury or the elimination of the jury altogether would go far toward correcting the handicap to law enforcement now supplied by the citizen jury system.

### THE PRISON

Most of the penalties for serious crimes consist of imprisonment, the terms of which may vary from a few days or months to life. The penalties are administered in prisons, where the convicts are deprived of their freedom during the specified time. This practice segregates criminals in large groups and, by denying them all other company, forces them into close association with each other. Their common fate gives them a common cause. Group solidarity is developed among them and their criminal tendencies are in many cases more firmly fixed. Instead of being reformed, they come to feel themselves the victims of oppression, against which they continue to rebel. Furthermore, the association of criminals in prison provides opportunity for the exchange of information regarding the techniques of crime. A youngster in prison cannot fail to learn much about the commission of crimes which he could not possibly have learned outside of prison. As long as we have prisons, there is perhaps no way to avoid these consequences. We cannot, of course, build a separate prison for every convict. Yet in sending criminals, especially younger ones, to prison, the probable effect of this treatment upon their personalities should not be overlooked. Almost all criminals sent to prison are sooner or later released into free society. Many of them, through pardons, paroles, commuta-

tions, and escapes, serve only a fraction of the terms for which they were committed. Quite likely the fear of imprisonment and the suffering endured by those who have experienced it have some deterrent effect upon criminal behavior, but it is by no means certain that this effect is not offset by the recidivism induced among ex-convicts as a result of the conditions of prison life.

#### CONCLUSION

Probably none of the recognized problems of organized society is more serious than crime. Its existence threatens the existence of society itself. No infallible remedy has been discovered. Criminal behavior is passed on in the folkways from generation to generation. The enactment of laws does not stop this process. The machinery set up to deal with crime is itself affected by tendencies to criminal behavior. In some cases, the operation of this machinery may actively encourage crime. This appears to be especially true in America, where the heterogeneity of society prevents the maintenance of definite and uniform standards of behavior. However, it is by no means certain that the complete suppression of crime would be desirable. Quite likely it could be attained only by the complete elimination of social change, without which progress would be impossible.

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## RACE AND NATIONALITY PROBLEMS

THE experiences of groups differ in much the same way as do the experiences of individuals. The result in the case of the individual is a unique set of habits; in the case of the group, a unique culture. The effects of past experiences are cumulative throughout the life of the individual and of the group, so that small differences in experience often repeated give rise to great differences in reaction. These differences appear to us as the distinctive aspects of cultures, by the various features of which we distinguish peoples. Recognized by the peoples themselves, these differences delineate tribes and nationalities, give rise to group consciousness, and furnish the guides by which the we-group and others-group are recognized.

Isolation produces social differences; contact eliminates them. In the distant past, when poorly developed techniques of economics and sanitation kept the population small, and lack of mechanical aids to communication kept the people apart, many distinctive culture groups developed within comparatively small areas. This has been particularly conspicuous in regions where natural barriers such as mountains, jungles, or water have added to the difficulties of communication. Even now, the inhabitants of islands and of mountainous districts retain culture traits which in more accessible regions have long since been modified.

### THE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLES

The available evidence indicates, however, that the isolation of the distant past was never quite complete. Ever since the beginning of the historical period peoples have moved from time to time. Quite likely they have always done so. Primi-



tive peoples, dependent upon the resources of the immediate vicinity for their living, were frequent victims of famine. The remedy often sought was removal to a more hospitable territory.

The early history of Europe consists essentially of a record of the movements of peoples. The population of the Eurasian continent appears to have increased more rapidly in the eastern portions than in the west. Exhaustion of the soil, depletion of the forests, or some similar factor forced large numbers of people to seek more productive lands. They naturally moved into the thinly settled parts of Europe, where the soil was as yet unexploited and where little human resistance was encountered. The temporally successive centers of civilization, Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, show a well-marked westward trend. The movements of the Goths, Huns, and Vandals in general directed themselves from east to west. The bitter conflicts arising between the invaders and the natives, as the movements proceeded, were nearly always won by the former.

The discovery of America gave renewed impetus to the westward migration, but the Atlantic proved a difficult barrier, and three centuries passed before people began crossing it in large numbers. As in Europe, the invaders encountered resistance from the natives of the new country. The defenders, however, were so deficient in numbers and in fighting techniques that they were soon driven out of all regions except those which the Europeans could not occupy on account of unfavorable climate. So quickly were the natives disposed of in what is now the United States that their culture left but little impression upon the culture of the Europeans. A few domesticated plants, notably Indian corn, a few words, mostly place names, and a few devices, such as the moccasin, the snowshoe, and the canoe, make up practically the entire contribution of the aborigines to their successors. Their government, religion, forms of family life, institution of property, and customs regulating personal relationship have left no significant traces.

The success of the English in colonizing North America gave to the culture of the region a distinctly English character, recognizable in every aspect of colonial life. Yet there were differences also. The experiences of the pioneers, incommunicable on account of the wide sea separating them from the mother country, modified their cultures and changed their interests so much that at last they rebelled and set up for themselves a new nation. Thenceforward, the cultural differences between England and the United States, aided by political separation, have continued to increase. Though still essentially English, American culture has now become clearly distinct from that of the mother country, as easily recognized as any of the European cultural groups.

#### IMMIGRATION

The conditions of life in America, to which its inhabitants have been obliged to adapt themselves, have developed new and appropriate cultural traits. This in itself would have been sufficient to give America a culture different from that of England. Another factor, however, has entered to create still greater differences, namely, immigration. For more than a hundred years, the various nations of Europe have contributed to American culture through those of their citizens who came to make their homes in the new world. During this period, more than thirty million aliens have entered the United States.

Their assimilation has not been accomplished without difficulties. In the beginning, particularly, the absence of control permitted the rise of unfortunate situations. Many of the arriving immigrants were without means and, lacking experience in America, were unable to make satisfactory economic adjustment before they were reduced to extreme need. The hardships of the long voyage, furthermore, left many of the passengers so weak and ill as to render them helpless for long periods. The burden of supporting these persons fell most heavily upon the seaport cities, where the poorest and weakest of the immigrants inevitably remained. To add to the difficulty, some European communities adopted the prac-

tice of sending paupers and criminals to America. Protests against unregulated immigration quite naturally came first from the inhabitants of the seaports. They attempted, without success, to keep out the undesirable groups by means of local ordinances. These ordinances were found to be so ineffective that State regulation had to be substituted. This, too, fell short of the ideal. Differences in the State regulations and the limitations imposed by the Federal government upon State legislation in international affairs prevented adequate control. In spite of the numerous laws, immigration to the United States remained practically free until the passage of Federal legislation in 1882. During this long period, the attitudes of Americans toward the immigrating peoples changed several times. When the immigrants came in such large numbers as to be able to retain a good many of their foreign traits by setting up separate communities, the Americans became afraid. They were fearful that the foreigners would ultimately displace the natives or at least outnumber them and thereby impose upon the American community an alien and inferior culture. The Know-Nothing movement of 1850-60 owed its popularity to the fear of domination by foreign groups.

#### FEDERAL CONTROL

With the establishment of Federal control, the immigration laws were more effectively enforced. Criminals, paupers, and contract laborers were kept out. For the first twenty-five years of this period, there was little hostility to immigration from Europe. Communities with small populations and large areas of unoccupied land welcomed the coming of new settlers. By the end of the century, however, practically all the free land worth having was gone, and large numbers of the immigrants began to settle in the cities. It was noticed at this time that the national characteristics of the immigrants were changing. Prior to 1880, most of the arrivals had come from the northern and western countries of Europe. After 1880, the numbers from these countries decreased, while the number of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe greatly in-

creased. As the "new immigration" continued to increase at the expense of the old, sentiment in favor of restricting the admission of foreigners appeared, soon growing strong enough to manifest itself in demands for legislation. The list of excluded undesirables was increased several times, but this was not enough. The ever-increasing new immigration was held to be inferior to the old and, consequently, not to be deserving of admission to America on the same terms. The literacy test was hit upon as a means of accomplishing this purpose without openly naming the undesirable nationalities. Though introduced into Congress several times, this measure did not pass until 1917, when the fear of a post-war deluge of immigrants enabled the measure to override the President's veto. It soon became evident that this provision alone would not be sufficient to cut down immigration to the desired limits. By 1918, a large majority of Americans had come to favor drastic reduction of immigration, and many advocated complete exclusion. The quota system was adopted, by which each of the various nations of the world is permitted to send annually a definite number of immigrants to the United States. By basing the quota number of each nationality upon the proportion of persons of the same nationality present in the United States in 1890, it has been possible to favor the old immigration and all but shut out the new. Since 1930, there has been virtually no immigration from Europe, and it is unlikely that America will reopen the doors to immigration at any time in the near future.

#### NON-EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION

While most of the immigrants to America have come from Europe, several other groups have appeared in sufficient numbers to attract attention and, in some cases, strong opposition. Of these groups, the Negroes are the most important. Coming to America almost as early as white men, Negroes have always made up a considerable portion of the population of the United States. They have not, however, succeeded in gaining status equal to that of the whites. In the beginning,

their race was associated with slavery, and the effects of the association still remain. Marked by color as a member of a group regarded by the white people as inferior, the individual Negro finds it impossible to escape the imputation of inferiority. No matter how great his personal achievements, he is never accepted in terms of equality by the members of the white race. Attempts on the part of Negroes to raise their status often meet with active opposition. Many conflicts have resulted from the unwillingness of the Negro to accept meekly the place assigned to him.

#### INTERNAL MIGRATIONS OF THE NEGRO

During and immediately following the World War a northward movement of the Negroes of America took hundreds of thousands from the cotton fields of the South and placed them in the industrial cities of the North. In some areas, the movement approached the character of wholesale flight, entire villages being practically depopulated in a few months. Southern white people became alarmed for fear an acute shortage of labor would result, and attempted to prevent the Negroes from leaving, but the consequences of their leaving were not nearly so serious as were the consequences of their arrival in the North. Crowded into the slums of the large city, the Negroes readily fell victims to their poverty and ignorance. Antagonisms between the whites and the blacks were aroused which, in some instances, ended in overt conflict.

#### THE MEXICANS

The continued demand for labor in the United States after European immigration had been stopped by the World War and, subsequently, by Federal regulation, gave an opportunity to the Mexicans to which they gladly responded. Permitted to come for several years with practically no restriction, at least one and one-half million Mexicans have immigrated to the United States. Several hundred thousands returned as a result of the economic depression of the early nineteen-thirties. Most of the Mexican immigrants remained in the border States,

notably California and Texas, but small numbers went to the northern cities, where they entered industrial employment of various kinds, and others became agricultural laborers in the fruit and sugar-beet areas in all parts of the United States.

The dark skin of the average Mexican makes him recognizable as such and, consequently, shuts him out from full participation in American life. The discrimination against the Mexican is not so severe as that against the Negro, but it is of exactly the same sort. The comparatively few individuals whose lighter color and better education enable them to avoid identification escape the prejudice almost entirely.

#### ORIENTALS—THE CHINESE

On the Pacific coast, the problem of the assimilation of immigrants from Asiatic countries has created much difficulty. The first of these peoples to arrive were the Chinese, who began coming to California about 1850, when the discovery of gold brought prospectors and miners in need of laborers, cooks, and launders. For a few years, the Chinese were freely admitted and welcomed. Had they contented themselves with the lowly occupations which they at first accepted, they might have been welcomed longer. However, they soon turned to the more profitable industry of gold mining, in which their diligence gave them an advantage over the Americans. Although they usually worked mines abandoned by Americans and never displayed aggressiveness in their contacts with whites, they were not long tolerated as direct competitors. The objections of the Americans took the form of tax laws designed to prevent the Chinese from carrying on profitably the more desirable occupations. The failure of these restrictions led to attempts at exclusion, which was finally achieved by a treaty in 1880 which gave the United States authority to regulate, limit, or suspend Chinese immigration. In 1882, Congress suspended Chinese immigration for ten years. The continuance of the laws in force at the end of the period and the exclusion in 1924 of aliens ineligible to citizenship remain as effective bars to Chinese who might wish to come to

America. In 1930, there were 75,000 in the United States, of whom nearly 31,000 were born in America.

### THE JAPANESE

The exclusion of the Chinese appears to have been the signal for the Japanese to take their places. Beginning in 1880, Japanese immigrants began to arrive in appreciable numbers. Like the Chinese, they were welcomed at first. Their usefulness as servants and laborers made them appear to be valuable additions to the population. They refused, however, to remain servants and laborers. By industry and frugality they secured capital and entered the field of business enterprise. Some of them began to operate stores; others began truck-farming. The latter were so successful that the white farmers feared they would soon own all the land on the Pacific coast. By 1900, definite anti-Japanese sentiment was well developed. Legislation forbidding aliens from owning or leasing land was resorted to, but, as is usual in such cases, the law was easily circumvented. The demand for exclusion on part of California proved highly embarrassing to the national government, since Japan, newly risen to the dignity of a first-class nation, was offended by the insult to her citizens. Exclusion was accomplished and Japanese dignity was preserved through the device known as the Gentlemen's Agreement, an informal arrangement entered into in 1907 whereby the United States consented not to exclude the Japanese in return for Japan's promise to keep her citizens at home. In spite of complaints by the people of the Pacific Coast that Japanese were coming in violation of the agreement, it remained in force until superseded by the restrictive legislation of 1917 and 1924.

### THE FILIPINOS

The natives of the Philippine Islands occupy a most anomalous position so far as nationality is concerned. Racially they are a mixture of aboriginal, Chinese, European, and other elements. Culturally they are a combination of native, Spanish, and American traits. Though living in what may still prop-

erly be regarded as a part of the United States, they are not accorded the rights of American citizens. They are, however, not aliens, and in the status of American subjects they have been permitted to come to the United States as immigrants, here to engage in any occupation and to become permanent residents. Considering the large population of the Islands, some thirteen million, the number taking advantage of this opportunity has been small. Less than 50,000 Filipinos were in the United States in 1930. The majority of these live near the Pacific coast, though "colonies" are found in several of the large cities.

Like the Chinese and Japanese, the Filipino immigrants are predominantly male. Unlike the former, however, the Filipinos have attempted to satisfy their desires for feminine society by seeking the companionship of white American women. In the large cities, the taxi-dance hall has given them an opportunity to secure such companionship temporarily by paying for it.<sup>1</sup> In other cases, they have made friends with American women through personal appeal. These pretensions have been resented by some of the whites in communities on the Pacific coast. Several cases of rioting and anti-Filipino demonstration have been reported.

#### GROUP VS. INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION

With the preceding historical résumé giving a view of the present status of races and nationalities in the United States, we may consider the socio-economic aspects of the situation. It must be recalled, in the first place, that all living things are more or less in competition with each other and that the more nearly alike the individuals are and the closer together they are the more intense is the competition among them. Human beings are, of course, no exception to this rule. Every person in the world is in competition with every other. But it is obvious that the competition between a shepherd in Australia and a fisherman in Scotland is all but negligible to the individuals concerned. On the other hand the Australian

<sup>1</sup> See Cressey, Paul, *The Taxi-Dance Hall*, 1932, pp. 145-74.



shepherd and his neighbor, both seeking pasture for their sheep, or the Scottish fisherman and his neighbor, both seeking a favorable spot to cast their nets, are clearly obstacles to each other's economic progress. Their nearness to each other enables them easily to recognize the fact, whereupon they are quite likely to fall into conflict. It is apparent, however, that a society in which antagonisms of this sort are permitted to flourish could not prosper if, indeed, it could exist at all. Moreover, there are many circumstances in which the competitors may gain by overlooking their personal differences and unite to attack the common enemy. Loyalty and devotion to group interests may thus turn out to be one of the best ways of satisfying individual interests. The members of a group well organized are likely to be better off than if each worked for himself alone, without regard for others. Society as a whole is made up of groups, large and small, through which the individual functions. Since the group serves to satisfy its members by winning the largest possible rewards from the world, it follows that there are limits beyond which it is not profitable to expand the group. In a conflict with nature all mankind may unite, but over the allotment of the spoils there is sure to be division.

Thus we have in our society classes, which are based upon the attainment of certain levels of status, for the most part determined by income. The diligent social climber likes nothing better than to leave one class for a higher one. Yet while he is a member of a given class he is bound by considerations of self-interest to yield his loyalty to that class, since it is only by the united effort of its members that the status so laboriously won can be maintained. However, as soon as he can qualify for membership in a higher class, he is admitted and thenceforth accorded the privileges of his new rank. In this way there is brought about considerable movement up and down the scale in our society.

When status is dependent upon racial instead of social traits, the process is quite different. The individual whose color marks him as belonging to an inferior group is doomed

forever to remain in that group. No matter how great his efforts or how numerous his achievements, he cannot gain admittance to higher status groups of different color. In all his relations with the group of higher status, he is likely to be constantly reminded of his racial characteristics and the limitations which these impose upon him. He cannot act without taking into account these limitations. His racial traits become for him the most important of his characteristics, and he thinks of himself primarily as a Negro, Chinese, or whatever he may be, rather than as a human being. The tendency to feel oneself inevitably joined to a group based upon biological characteristics is called race consciousness. Its effect is to organize and solidify the group. Individual members who have tried unsuccessfully to gain status outside the group realize that they can attain their ends only by raising the status of the group as a whole. They thereupon cast their lots with the rest and co-operate to raise the whole group.

Attempts of diverse groups to win a satisfactory place for themselves practically always take the form of conflict. Solutions to these conflicts are extremely difficult to find, since they invariably involve the demand for a superiority which only one side can attain. Able individuals appear in the inferior group, and these, unwilling to accept their low positions, stir up trouble. The superior group resists these attempts to encroach upon its prerogatives (with physical force if necessary). Thus is kept alive continuously a feeling of dislike between the racial groups which, upon occasion, flares up into actual fighting.

#### CONFLICTS BETWEEN CULTURE GROUPS

The ordinary individual does not clearly distinguish between differences of race and differences of culture. A man who speaks and dresses queerly is as readily identified as one of a different color. If, therefore, he attempts to enter into competition for social preferment, he is likely to find himself in the same predicament as if he were racially different from his competitors. He cannot escape the imputation of inferiority

associated with his cultural peculiarities. He is pushed back into his own group and forced to accept the status of that group. He is likely to react to this situation by stoutly insisting upon the superiority of his group and by attempting in various ways to demonstrate it to the community.

From the long-range point of view, however, conflicts based upon cultural differences are much less serious than those based upon racial differences. Culture can be changed; skin color remains permanently. Exceptional individuals, exposed to the influence of a new culture early in life, can so completely acquire it as to appear culturally identical with their neighbors. With such a change successfully completed, the individual is no longer recognizable as belonging to an alien group. The conflict aimed at the alien group passes him by. If the contacts are numerous, cultural differences between individuals and groups disappear rapidly. Racial differences are more persistent. The process of amalgamation obliterates the clear boundary between races which live together in the same area and, ultimately, the races themselves, but the process is extremely slow. Cultural differences may disappear in a few generations; racial differences may remain for a thousand years.

#### THE FORMS OF RACE AND CULTURE CONFLICT

Conflicts between races and nationalities are not limited to any particular set of patterns. Any form of opposition which gives promise of advantage may be utilized by the contending parties. Physical violence and bloodshed may be found in extreme cases. In view of the widespread acceptance in the mores of the principle that human life should not be needlessly sacrificed, certain rationalizations often accompany conflicts resulting in the death of some of the participants. The superior group is likely to define the event as punishment for crime in which the offending individuals are given their just deserts, rather than as a phase of race conflict. That the punishment is not administered through the orderly procedure of court action interferes but little with the acceptance of the

definition. In fact, the procedure of attack upon the inferior race may itself assume a certain judicial aspect, in accord with the definition. This is the case with lynching, in which an attempt is often made to identify the victim as the perpetrator of a crime, challenging the position of the superior race. That the action of the superior race is not truly judicial is indicated by the tendency for lynchings to include victims other than the alleged criminals and sometimes to end in a general attack upon all representatives of the inferior race found in the vicinity. In the so-called "race riot" the general attack is characteristic, but even here the punitive purpose of the attack is insisted upon.

The rationalizations of the inferior race usually run in terms of retaliation or defense. Grievances of many sorts are nursed by the leaders of the group, in many cases deliberately emphasized through agencies of propaganda created for the purpose. Almost any act directed against the superior race may be justified on the ground that it serves in some part to even up the score. Neither side admits that it ever takes the offensive. Every move is represented as of necessity following one previously made by the opponents, thus making of every action a defensive measure.

The less violent aspects of race and nationality conflict are likely to consist largely in a struggle for control of the institutional life of the society and in the superior group attempting to secure the benefits of social action for themselves alone. Political disabilities are inflicted upon the inferior group in order to keep the government from falling into their hands. They may be prevented from voting, holding office, or serving on juries. The expenditure of public money is usually so directed as to benefit the superior group more than the inferior. The latter, for example, may be deprived of the opportunities of free education offered to the superiors, or they may be denied admission to public parks, playgrounds, and libraries. Usually an attempt is made to segregate them in some of the less desirable parts of the cities where they are

found. These parts are often neglected so far as such public improvements as paving, street-lighting, and sanitation are concerned.

Discrimination against the inferior group in economic life is also common, but because self-interest often outweighs group loyalty, this form of the conflict between races is carried out less systematically than others. A merchant of the superior group is reluctant to refuse the profit to be made from business dealings with men of another race or nationality. Similarly, it is difficult for the consumer to pass by opportunities to save money, even if he must deal with the enemy to do so. The average American, for example, will buy fruit from the Japanese dealers rather than from the Americans whenever he can thereby secure better bargains. The consequence is that the population contains a number of persons of the inferior group whose incomes are higher than those of a number of persons in the superior group. In view of the importance in our society of economic position in the determination of social position, this situation calls for drastic action. A series of discriminations in purely social situations is therefore devised to keep the inferiors in their place. They are excluded from theaters, restaurants, hotels, churches, and public conveyances frequented by the superiors. When, in the capacity of servants, they are required to be present in the company of superiors, a uniform indicates their position. Sometimes sumptuary laws restrain the expenditures of the inferiors to limits regarded as in accord with their social position. These restrictions work well enough as long as they are accepted by the inferiors, but often serve as a source of irritation to them, which breeds resentment and open hostility. The net result to society as a whole is a loss in economic efficiency and in the security of life and property.

#### INDIVIDUAL ASPECTS OF RACE AND CULTURE CONFLICT

Wherever two groups of different race or culture live in close contact, there are always some persons who in some degree belong to both groups. In the case of racial groups, there are

hybrids who may be treated as members of either group, dependent upon the circumstances. In the case of cultural groups, certain individuals may function readily in both cultures. Needless to say, the comparative ease with which culture is learned results in a large number of individuals acquiring dual cultures; whereas only a few can ever successfully pass as members of either race. But no matter how great the apparent success with which such persons function, their participation is at best only partial, perhaps even superficial. They may deceive all their associates, but to themselves they must appear as actors, who only pretend to fit into the rôle they play and who actually are quite different persons. Rarely do they have an opportunity to present their true personalities, for society has little patience with persons of divided loyalties, who are on both sides or on none at all. Persons of this group therefore can never feel quite at ease, no matter in what social relationship they find themselves. In situations involving conflict they are intensely uncomfortable, since, being more or less sympathetic with both sides, they are dissatisfied no matter which side wins or loses. Only occasionally is an individual who shares two cultures able to conceal the fact altogether. He is therefore made the object of the hostilities carried on between the groups. Each group regards him as essentially a member of the other, and treats him accordingly. Even if he could reconcile himself to his position, he could not be comfortable, for he is continually reminded of his alien connections and often definitely discriminated against. An especially difficult situation is encountered by the individual whose race is, for example, Japanese, and whose culture is American. His color bars him from the American group; his culture bars him from the Japanese. His only refuge is to be found in the company of the few unfortunates who are in a similar position.

The number of persons in America who have suffered from racial and culture conflicts reaches many millions. Practically all immigrants and most of their children have had this experience. Subjectively, it is recognized in feelings of inferior-

ity, failure, resentment, and unhappiness. Objectively, the results appear in various forms of personal disorganization, such as pauperism, crime, vice, mental disease, and suicide. The foreign born contribute somewhat more than their share of the economically maladjusted in America, because they cannot compete on a basis of equality with the native born. Usually the foreigners are the first to be laid off when work is slack and the last to be taken on when work is plentiful. Because of their foreign actions and appearance, they are given lower wages than native workers. They are not given positions of trust and authority as long as the native born are available as candidates for these positions. The resulting economic failures among the foreign born and the sense of insecurity which attends even the successful, subjects every individual concerned to a heavy strain.<sup>2</sup>

#### SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENT AMONG THE FOREIGN BORN

In spite of this, however, the foreign born in general manifest a low crime rate. Possibly the training they received in their youth before coming to America inculcated in them so high a respect for law that even the temptations of the economically unsuccessful cannot change their attitudes and behavior. Among the children of the foreign born, however, the situation is quite different. These are subject to little of the restraining influence of European training. On the other hand, their contacts with Americans are likely to be made largely with representatives of those groups which, having little status to conserve, are willing to associate with the immigrants. The children of the foreign born, in consequence, manifest a comparatively high delinquency rate, both juvenile and adult. So severe is the struggle of the immigrants in America and so heavy is their handicap that many of them fail to survive. They suffer disorganization of their personalities, which reduces many of them to helplessness. Some seek the temporary oblivion of drink or drugs or abandon themselves to the diversions of gambling or sex vice. Others

<sup>2</sup> See Stonequist, E. V., *The Marginal Man*, 1937.

retreat from the world completely, constructing for themselves a milieu of imagination in which they no longer feel the cruelties of reality. Still others, finding none of these solutions possible, escape the conflict by taking their own lives.

#### ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

The difficulties of the foreigner and of the man of a different color have not gone unheeded by Americans. True, the bitterness and intensity of anti-foreign feeling in America have hampered all efforts to solve the problem peaceably, but sincere attempts have been made nonetheless. Numerous organizations have been formed for the purpose of aiding the newly arrived immigrant to make social and economic adjustment. In many cases, these organization have had to protect the immigrant from rapacious members of his own group who gain his confidence through speaking his language and then prey upon his ignorance. Some of these organizations offer instruction in English, in occupational techniques, in the rights and duties of citizenship, and in American ways in general.

#### AMERICANIZATION

During the period of the World War and for some years thereafter, attempts to assimilate the foreign born in the United States assumed the proportions of a general social movement. It was motivated in large part by fear of foreign domination and tended, consequently, to stress heavily the matter of patriotism and loyalty to American national policies. Attempts were made to Americanize foreigners by giving them a smattering of American history and some knowledge of the contents of the constitution and the Declaration of Independence. Because of the failure of its leaders to understand the nature of the process of assimilation, the movement has little accomplishment to its credit. The foreigners were quick to see the small part played by patriotic exercises in American life and took but little interest in them. Moreover, they were unable, even with the best of intentions, to



shed their old-world culture like a coat in order to put on the new. Becoming an American is a long, slow process, not to be accomplished by attending a few meetings. The only lasting results of the Americanization movement are to be found in the teaching of English, which was incidental to the program as a whole.

#### NEGRO-WHITE RECONCILIATION

Many persons in America have come to a realization of the fact that that Negro-white conflict seriously interferes with the efficiency of both races and contributes nothing to the welfare of either, for, as ordinarily carried on, the conflict is always inconclusive and, consequently, continuous. With the object of bringing about a reconciliation, a number of associations and committees have been formed, many consisting of representatives from both races. The method employed by these organizations is to set in motion a process of accommodation to replace conflict. Ordinarily, no attempt is made to bring about equality between the races or to induce them to enter into more intimate association, but the limits of action between the two races are defined and attempts made to keep interracial contacts within these limits. When a situation arises which threatens to break forth into active conflict, the reconciliation committee tries to settle the difficulty by arbitration. This scheme brings to bear upon the problem the better elements of the two races, both desiring peaceful relations, instead of leaving the question to be fought out by the marginal elements of the races, where the friction is most likely to occur. These committees have had considerable success in adjusting differences between the races. They do not, to be sure, permanently dispose of interracial conflict, but they do supply working agreements upon the basis of which amicable relations may be maintained for a considerable period.

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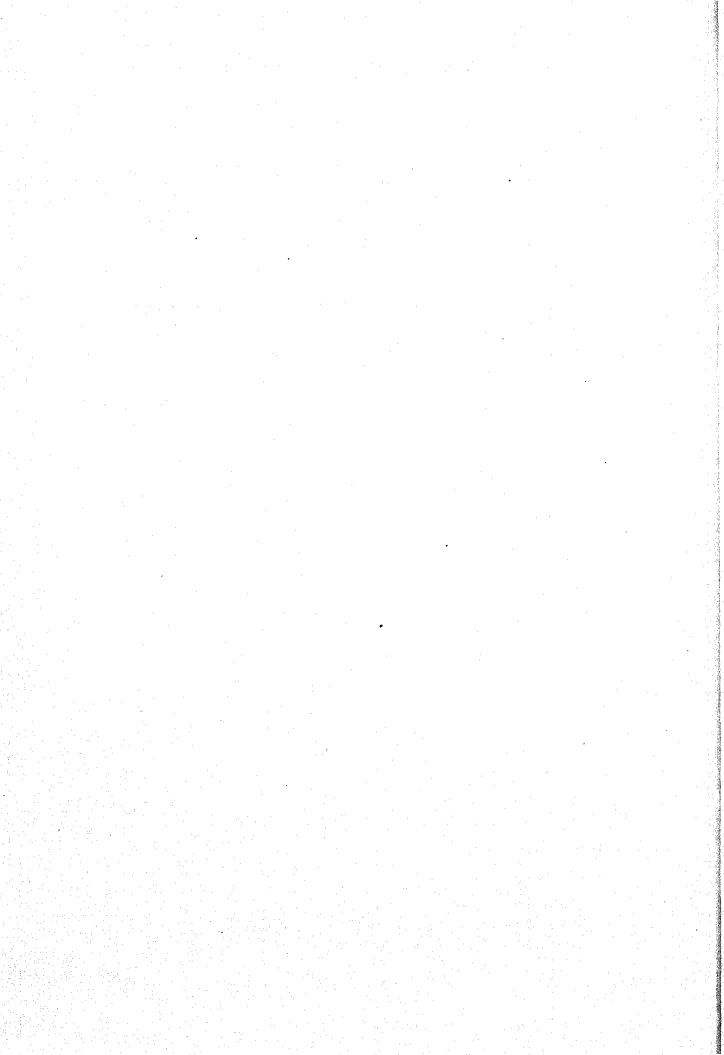
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